



2023 Strategic Plan

Adopted By the
Manistee Recreation Association Board
February 20th, 2023



Prepared for the Manistee Recreation Association

2023 Board Members:

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Treasurer – Cindy Lundberg

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Prepared by Networks Northwest



Mission Statement

The Manistee Recreation Association (MRA) is dedicated as the primary provider of recreational services to the communities of the Greater Manistee Region. Our mission is to provide opportunities for team building while fostering individual growth, supporting families, and promoting healthy lifestyles. Through our actions and core values, the MRA strives to continuously maintain trust with our community.

Vision Statement

To continue to be the trusted leader in recreation programming in the Manistee Region, delivering quality physical activity while promoting enjoyment and building community.

Core Values

- Community
- Growth
- Education
- Stability
- Health
- Family
- Fun & Enjoyment
- Trust

Organization Summary

Established in 1942, the Manistee Recreation Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, dedicated to providing recreational activities and sports programming for the Greater Manistee Area. The organization is supported through funding by community partners including the City of Manistee, and the Townships of Brown, Filer, Manistee, Bear Lake and Onekama, area business sponsors and program registration fees. Community is a core value of the MRA and preparation of this “Strategic Plan” weighed heavily on the input achieved through community engagement efforts, in order to effectively shape the directives of the organization to align with those desired by the members of the community.

Process Methodology

Strategic direction was initiated through community engagement and molded into the Strategy presented within this plan through the guidance of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and Staff. The process included the following steps.

1. Issuance of a community survey marketed and directed at MRA participants, guardians and parents of participants and the community at large. (*Survey & Results in Appendix A*)
2. Direct community engagement at recreation program game and activity days. Flyer's promoting the survey were handed out to parents and informal discussion of levels of support or concerns that need to be addressed concerning the organization were had as opportunity arose. Attended program activities included spring soccer, tennis camp, t-ball, machine pitch, little league and fall soccer.
3. Talled survey results and shared with MRA Staff and Board Members.
4. Strategic Planning Meeting #1: MRA Board Members and Staff were provided an introductory question sheet electronically prior to the meeting. The three questions provided answers which directed the establishment of themes through discussion to guide Mission and Vision statement development. The second half of the meeting focused on performing a SWOT Analysis to determine Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
5. Strategic Planning Meeting #2: MRA Board Members and Staff were provided a draft document outlining a Mission and Vision Statement, and accompanying list of draft goals. Review, comments and edits were performed to all written materials.
6. Draft document was prepared and distributed to MRA Board Members and Staff.
7. Strategic Planning Meeting #3: MRA Board Members and Staff prioritized goals, determined implementation timelines and assigned responsible parties.
8. Strategic Plan Final Draft reviewed by MRA Board Members and Staff.
9. Strategic Plan formally adopted by MRA Board on February 20th, 2023.



Take Our Survey

The Manistee Recreation Association is interested in your input!

Information gathered through this Survey will guide the MRA Board as they develop their strategic plan, to update their vision and mission, in order to best serve our communities.

Please scan the QR code or enter the link at the bottom of the page to take the survey.



https://networksnorthwest.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5gNxHMKVKN10g2gu

Survey Flyer Handed Out at MRA Program Events

Survey Results

The survey provides direct input from the community with the following resulting information.

- 233 responses were obtained through the survey. This is a statistically sound representation of the community participants in MRA recreational activities and programs.
- The largest percentage of respondents were from the City of Manistee at 39% with Manistee and Filer Townships combining for 26%. The remaining respondents were spread throughout the remaining communities with participation lacking from Arcadia, Cleon and Marilla Townships.
- The vast majority of respondents at 68% were 25-54 years old, with 82% of total respondents identifying as a parent or guardian.
- Youth Soccer (Spring & Fall), Basketball, T-Ball & Machine Pitch, Kid Swim (winter), Club Soccer (Spring & Fall), Flag Football, Little League and Tennis led the activities identified as having youth enrolled within by respondents.
- 68.18% of respondents were extremely or somewhat satisfied with MR Youth League Selection, with an additional 28.88% of respondents neutral on the topic.
- Participation levels for activities are impacted most by day/time of game and practices 28%, location of games and practices 15%, and costs associated with participation 11%. It is important to note that 23% of respondents felt nothing impacted their participation.
- Participants noted that additional youth leagues should be offered for volleyball, softball, tennis, golf, archery/fencing, gymnastics, karate, wrestling, additional swimming, running/ track
- Only 44% of respondents stated they would participate in adult leagues if made available.
- Adult programming suggestions included kickball, soccer, volleyball, disc golf, ladies basketball/softball, pickle-ball, bowling, hiking, and archery.
- Support for funding MRA programs through already established avenues such as enrollment fees, local unit of government support and local business support ranked the highest, with many supporting future collaborative ventures with other recreation minded organizations.
- 75% of respondents stated they support collaborative partnerships with other recreation related agencies.
- Respondents felt the MRA Board and Staff have been responsive to there expressed needs at 72%.
- Statements made to increase responsiveness involved answering questions when asked, not letting coaches stack teams, stronger communication, more advertisement, continued community and local government support for funding, more training for staff and coaches, and improving field and recreation space conditions.
- Preferred communication methods by respondents in terms of priority ranking are social media, email, website and text.
- Statements were provided supporting communication via mail, newsletters, through schools via fliers, announcements, message boards and phone apps.
- Final written comments included the following:
 - ◇ More training for staff, coaches and refs.
 - ◇ Many satisfied and very satisfied responses.
 - ◇ More practice time.
 - ◇ Offer refunds for cancellations.
 - ◇ Follow-up with coaches to improve their skill-set.
 - ◇ Invest in staff.
 - ◇ Dissatisfied with certain sponsors, and wide range of ages on team.
 - ◇ Need continuity of leadership.
 - ◇ Maintain and update website.
 - ◇ Maintain database of past and current registrants.
 - ◇ Communication of registration deadlines is very important.

SWOT Analysis

Strength

- History, well known and established brand
- Growth in short time to make necessary change (recent change) (Staff and Board acting in this capacity)
- Board recognized when changes needed to be made
- Consistency in terms of quality performance that is now being resurrected
- Community supports MRA (Financial) (Provided grace during difficult times)
- Participation numbers have been relatively stable
- Resilience and determination as an organization when times were difficult
- Don't own assets in terms of facilities

Threat

- Lack of Finances (financial reality of region)
- Competing for finances (financial reality of region)
- Competing organizations (unwillingness to collaborate) (services provided)
- Lack of facilities
- Participation (aging population)
- Losing housing for full-time permanent residents

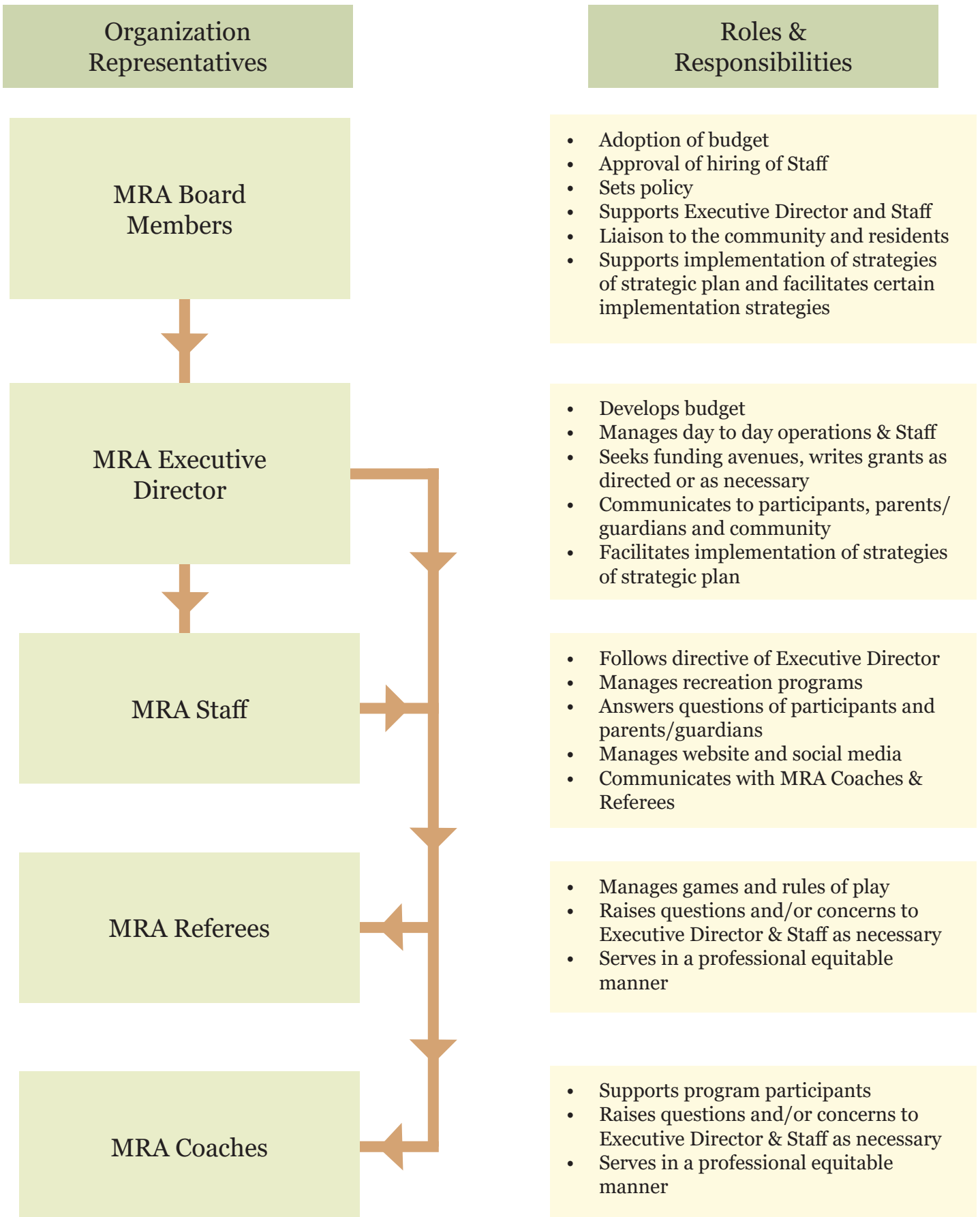
Weakness

- Board was too trusting
- Communication (internal organization)
- Staff turnover (5 new leaders in 4 years)
- Processes for policy (board) (training & recruiting)
- Finances (Whether a local unit has funding for allotment) (Potential of unfamiliarity by new elected officials at local units) (Lack of fund balance)
- Equipment (lack of an inventory) (aged & potentially degraded)
- Losing open space and facilities

Opportunity

- Collaboration
- Manistee County Community Foundation Grants & Funds (Minger) (Other Opportunities)
- Marketing (Social Media) (Financial Ask) (Awareness & Messaging through descriptive narratives) (Electronic/Digital Footprint)
- Sponsorships
- Expansion to Adult Leagues

Organizational Chart



**Note that the roles and responsibilities provides guidance and is not a fully comprehensive list of duties.*

Strategies and Implementation

The strategies found within this plan were developed through a comprehensive approach which included the gathering of stakeholder input with the community survey, analysis of the survey results through discussion held by the MRA Board, Staff and Planning Team; followed by a SWOT analysis conducted with MRA Board Members and Staff. Through this approach, overarching themes and accompanying objectives were developed, of which strategies with direct actions for implementation were framed.

Strategy flow follows this progression:

Overarching Theme > Objective > Strategy > Actions

Implementation efforts for individual actions are reliant upon a cooperative approach of Board Members and Staff. Strategies must be prioritized with a fair time-frame provided for implementation of specific actions, and delegating responsible parties for those actions. It is pertinent to understand, that while several strategies may be implemented simultaneously, it is not beneficial to the organization as a whole to adjust capacity from day to day operations to implementation activities that would decrease a level of service to the participants and community. Therefore prioritization must occur for individual strategies and actions.

Overarching Strategy Themes

- Communication
- Financial Management and Funding
- Community Building
- Collaboration
- Programming
- Equipment
- Marketing
- Association Management

Strategy Tables

Table Keys:

Priority: High, Medium, Low

Time-Frame: (on-going), (1) Year, (2) Year, (3), (4+) Year

Responsible Parties: Board = BRD, Executive Director = ED, Staff = S

Communication

Objective	Maintain and increase communication with residents and participants.		Prior-ity	Time-frame	Responsible Party			
Strategy	Utilize periodic press releases or news stories within local newspaper for updates concerning MRA status and MRA programs							
Action	Set a schedule of yearly necessary updates					H	1	ED, S
Action	Set schedule to a calendar for reminders					H	1	ED, S
Objective	Increased Digital & Direct Communication via Social Media, Website, Email and Phone Text		Prior-ity	Time-frame	Responsible Party			
Strategy	Desired methods of communication from residents are those included above; explore feasibility of utilization of multiple forms for single stream communications.							
Action	Determine ease of use for updates through single statement through multiple channels. Examples being: (Social Media Posts to FB) (Website Home Page “Important Updates”) (Email/Text communication blast)					H	1	ED, S
Action	Explore software options for directories, determine if cost equates to efficiency for tracking participant & community member contact information.					H	1	ED, S

Financial Management & Funding

Objective	Maintain a sound balanced budget.		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	A balanced budget allows for more ease of organization management and preparation for potential hardships.				
Action	Forecast current year budget needs based upon at least 3 priors' years averages.		H	3, 4+	ED, BRD
Action	Though difficult, generate ideas centered on potential pop-up expenses within a budget year, and set aside a contingency fund to account for such issues.		H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Carry-over contingency fund and roll into updated fund each fiscal year.		H	1, 2	ED, BRD
Objective	Explore, Pursue and Expand funding opportunities		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Collaborate and Coordinate with the Manistee County Community Foundation (MCCF)				
Action	Determine the feasibility of creating a fund for support of certain activities within the organization. (example being: sport equipment upgrades)		M	3, 4+	BRD
Action	Advocate for best use for recreational funding by the MCCF.		M	2, 3	BRD, ED
Action	Review organization needs and make organization grant requests based upon those needs.		H	1	BRD, ED
Strategy	Explore and Support Recreational Funding				
Action	A Dedicated Recreational Millage has been discussed in circles within the community, attaining some attention at the County Board level. Continue to support and facilitate these conversations, providing input of the necessity of some funding towards community-wide recreation programming.		L	3, 4+	BRD
Action	Determine "large community donors", and promote efforts towards approaching these individuals about supporting recreational programming.		M	1, 2	ED, BRD
Strategy	Participating Municipalities should be maintained and expanded.				
Action	Continue strong communications to local units of government relaying importance of their support of funding for programming.		H	1	ED
Action	Continue to meet with non-participating local units of government relaying the importance of the MRA to their community residents.		H	1	ED
Action	Continue to work towards having all local units of government within the Greater Manistee Area participate in the support of the organization.		H	1	ED

Community Building

Objective	Continue to build community and community support for the organization.		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Utilize media and social media for communication opportunities.				
	Action	Utilize press releases on a regular basis for spreading awareness of the organization.	H	1	ED, S
	Action	Utilize social media a least 3x monthly to spread awareness of the organization.	H	1	S
Strategy	The MRA organization should be front and center during specified community events.				
	Action	Utilize community events such as Forest Fest, Bear Lake Days or Onekama Days to have board member(s) attended table/booth with information for residents and visitors, spreading awareness and support for the organization.	M	1, 2	BRD, ED, S

Collaboration

Objective	Collaborate to create efficiency, cost effectiveness and shared support.		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Outreach to like-minded organizations, the school system and local units of government for collaborative approaches.				
	Action	Out-reach to local recreational organizations, regardless of involvement with programming to see if partnerships for shared support make sense.	L	2, 3, 4+	ED, BRD
	Action	Out-reach to the school system for collaboration and discussion of shared use of assets.	M	on-going	ED
	Action	Out-reach to local units of government for collaboration and discussion of shared use of assets.	M	on-going	ED
	Action	Involvement with the County Recreation Planning Update Process. Participate and help guide County and Local Unit priorities in the 5 year updates to the County-Wide Recreation Plan.	L	3, 4+	BRD, ED, S
	Action	Become a recognized and integral stakeholder in any community process.	H	on-going	BRD, ED
	Action	Explore opportunities to collaborate/partner to support organizations which serve recreational users with special needs.	L	2, 3	ED, S

Programming

Objective	Expand programming to include activities desired by residents.	Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Meet the needs of the community as expressed through comments and feedback received in the community survey.			
Action	Review the community survey for activities suggested for inclusion.	H	1	BRD
Action	Reach out to groups and other organizations which may have involvement with those supported activities to ensure the community needs are met.	M	2, 3	ED, BRD
Action	Explore holding a community input via social media or face to face session to get additional input on those specified desired activities.	H	on-going	ED, BRD

Equipment

Objective	Expand equipment inventory and equipment quality.	Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Provide necessary equipment in a quality condition to those families in need of assistance due to financial hardship or constrain.			
Action	Create an inventory of existing equipment. Create a quality ranking system, rate each piece based upon condition, note size, identify if in need of replacement.	H	1	ED, BRD
Action	Note equipment deficiencies upon completion of the equipment inventory.	H	on-going	ED
Action	Reach out to the Manistee County Community Foundation to see about setting up an “equipment fund”, for purchasing equipment to be shared to financially constrained families.	H	1	ED, S

Marketing

Objective	Maintain Organization Brand		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Trusted Community Organization continues to benefit community as spoken in circles throughout the Community.				
Action	See Communication Actions “press those actions”				
Action	See Community Building, second objective above “press that action”				
Action	Elevator Speech should be developed by Board. Board members should be able to recite Mission and Vision Statements.				
Action	Board members should be prepared to deliver the elevator speech and be willing to do so at any time		H	1	BRD, S
Action			H	1	ED, BRD
Action			H	1	BRD
Action			H	on-going	BRD
Objective	Create Marketing Materials		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Colorful and informative materials which are relevant to the current offerings of the organization should be offered.				
Action	Develop a template for marketing materials which include a “tri-fold pamphlet” and a “rack-card”				
Action	Utilize template and plug and play information for yearly or every two year updates to the marketing material template.				
Action			H	1	S, ED
Action			H	on-going	S, ED
Objective	Utilize Social Media (FB, Instagram, TikTok) to market the organization brand		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Create buzz about on-going programs, with participant and community location pictures, as well as support posts for similar recreation groups, entities or sites.				
Action	Put together social media posts on an array of platforms that build upon the brand of health, fun, community, etc. These posts shouldn’t be about program due dates, but rather about a great sunny day on the soccer field, tennis court or baseball diamond. Post about a new field or court upgrades and improvements. Support like-minded entities which share your similar goals.				
Action			H	on-going	S, ED
Objective	Make the Website an inviting, intriguing site while maintaining information		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Update the website				
Action	Brainstorm website ideas with Board.				
Action	Review website update options and expense.				
Action			H	on-going	BRD, ED, S
Action			M	2, 3	BRD, ED, S
Objective	Newspaper Articles and Press Releases are regularly occurring.		Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Utilize periodic press releases or news stories within local newspaper for updates concerning MRA status and MRA programs.				
Action	See Communication Actions				
Action			H	on-going	S, ED

Association Management

Objective	Policy Development for organization directives and management	Priority	Time-frame	Responsible Party
Strategy	Provide a policy manual which outlines procedure, organization stance and directive for various activities under the organization umbrella			
Action	Communication needs and participant directory upon registration (emails strongly suggested) set within policy chapter	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Communication avenue and needs to participants within a policy chapter.	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter outlining the role of coaches, potential training avenues and resources, how to contact parents and participants and their responsible role with the organization.	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter outlining the role of referees, potential training avenues and resources, how to deal with difficult parents, participants or other attendees, and their responsible role with the organization.	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter in how to deal with inclement weather notifications, the stance of the organization, and whether practices or games will be made-up	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter in how to deal with unruly participants or parents, and the stance of the organization.	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter on how to be an effective MRA Board Member.	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter on staff including leadership and staff members	H	on-going	ED, BRD
Action	Policy chapter on background check procedures for board members, staff and volunteers.	H	on-going	ED, BRD

Evaluation Framework

One of the most important aspects of this strategic plan is the monitoring of the success of implementation of the plan strategies and actions. Below is a four step process that provides an avenue for monitoring implementation on a regular basis. It is recommended that evaluation occur quarterly for the first year and then be conducted biannually for successive years.

To help facilitate the evaluation framework, an excel spreadsheet has been created and transferred digitally to the organization. A copy can be viewed in Appendix B. This spreadsheet contains each action item and provides a comprehensive way to digitally manage evaluation progress.

1. Review actions implemented during this evaluation period. All actions undertaken should be broken down, with specific tasks completed for the action placed within the notes of the spreadsheet.
2. Adjust the status of specific actions in the spreadsheet as necessary. Change status of action to; “initiated”, “on-going”, “paused”, “completed”.
3. Review priorities and adjust prioritization within the spreadsheet.
4. Move forward with implementation of on-going and high priority actions.

Plan Adoption Certification

The Manistee Recreation Association, having undertaken a comprehensive strategic planning process for the organization, and having participated in preparing and providing support for the information contained within this plan and accompanying appendices does formally approve and adopt this strategic plan on the 20th day of February, 2023, at a regularly scheduled board meeting.

Board Member Signatories:

Kenny Kott, President

Date

Cindy Lundberg, Treasurer

Date

Eric Ware, Secretary

Date

Matt Kieffer, Member

Date

Mitch Deisch, Member

Date

Dursa Marshall, Executive Director

Date