



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

Table of Contents

2 Introduction

2 Assets of the Black Arts District

4 About the Strategic Planning Process

4 The Strategic Plan

6 Resource Development

6 Marketing & Outreach

7 Partnership Enhancement & Programming

8 Advocacy

9 Organizational Growth & Sustainability

9 Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Appendix A: Black Arts District Overview

Appendix B: Map of the District

Appendix C: Community Engagement Report

Appendix D: SOAR Analysis Results

Appendix E: Strategic Plan Committee

Appendix F: Strategic Planning Timeline

Introduction

Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District (“Black Arts District”) entered in a strategic planning process in February 2020, in partnership with KS Solutions Consulting (Consultants, Kate Scherr- Adams and Troy Burton) for strategic planning and project management and Consultant, Saida Agostini for community input and data collection. The venture was to strategically plan ahead 3 years for this new organization, which has already made substantial progress in its 1-2 years of existence, much of that time being during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Assets of the Black Arts District

Before addressing the goals and objectives, it is important to acknowledge the assets and strengths of the organization and the people who are the backbone of it. The consultants were impressed throughout the process with the energy, ingenuity and passion of the board and staff. Also of significant note is the skill set within the board and staff being a strong band of professionals with varying community engagement, organizational management and artistic expertise.

Another asset of the organization is community engagement and investment in this new entity coordinating and enhancing Black community, history, culture and the arts. We received over 100 responses to a broadly distributed community survey that was shared as part of our strategic planning process. It is often difficult to get high response rates for new and local organizations. During this process, the Black Arts District also hosted its first Black Artist Fair with great success with 4,000 participants and vast media coverage including MSNBC.

The Black Arts District is positioned well to be a catalyst for further cultural and physical community development, as well as a city-wide promoter and supporter of Black creatives, access to the arts, community building, and enhancing the quality of life and passion for the arts for communities in Baltimore.

The **mission** of the Black Arts District, through an anti-displacement framework, empowers Black creatives and continues the community-based revitalization efforts in West Baltimore through culture, arts, and entertainment.

Our **vision** is that the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts & Entertainment District is to be a model for Black creative autonomy.

The **values** of the Black Arts District are:

- Love for Black/African Diaspora People
- Observance of African Diaspora Histories and Culture
- Black/African-Centered
- Unity
- Creativity
- Legacy
- Empowerment

The **programming** Areas of the Black Arts District are categorized into 4 areas:

Events & Activities -Curating and promoting experiences that encourage creativity, connection and celebration.

Training & Development- Supporting local creatives and cultural institutions to achieve their creative and economic potential.

Advocacy & Education - Championing policies and practices that lead to a more informed, empowered and culturally equitable Baltimore.

Creative Placemaking - Using art and culture to shape the physical and social character of West Baltimore. This includes community development projects.

The strategic plan is built and implemented to support these programming areas. In order to succeed effectively in the 4 areas, the plan serves as the backbone to the organization to make intention and vision a reality.

About the Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning (action) is an organizational management activity used to:

- Sets priorities
- Focus energy and resources
- Strengthen operations
- Ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals
- Establish agreements around intended outcomes/results
- Assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.

Strategic plan (product) is a document that articulates both the decisions made about the organization's goals and the ways in which the organization will achieve those goals. The strategic plan is intended to guide the organization's leaders in their decision-making moving forward.

Community Engagement Effort

As part of the strategic plan, the broader community was invited to participate. This included Black artists, businesses and residents of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor and other related stakeholders. The data was collected through three separate collection methods, online survey, stakeholder interviews and facilitated storytelling sessions.

The key topic areas that surfaced in the community engagement efforts were:

- Marketing & Community Engagement Barriers to Black Cultural Programming
- Artist Development & Mentorship
- Protection of Baltimore's Black Artist History
- Perceptions of Community Safety

View the full community engagement report, Appendix B.



SOAR Analysis



The SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) analysis is a tool that focuses an organization on its current strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals. When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

- What are our greatest strengths?
- What are our best opportunities?
- What is our preferred future?
- What are the measurable results that will tell us we've achieved our vision of the future?

The full discussion notes from the Black Arts District SOAR Analysis are shared in Appendix C.

The Strategic Plan



RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT



MARKETING &
OUTREACH



PARTNERSHIP
ENHANCEMENT &
PROGRAMMING



ADVOCACY



ORGANIZATIONAL
GROWTH &
SUSTAINABILITY

Resource Development

Goal 1: Strategize and diversify fund development efforts to support and enhance exposure of Black creatives and the Black Arts District

Objective: Utilize a detailed resource development plan as a fundraising tool.

Objective: Locate funding streams from corporations, HBCUs and others to benefit Black creatives for development such as a fellowship program, artist residencies, home buying, etc.

Objective: Develop opportunities for fee for service offerings as a revenue source and to elevate the Black Arts District as an expert in Black art.

Goal 2: Obtain the needed capital campaign funds to secure development of the Sanaa Center and an outdoor courtyard

Objective: Execute a capital campaign plan.

Objective: Consult with a capital campaign expert to advise in the fundraising process.

Marketing & Outreach

Goal 1: Increase awareness about the Black Arts District as a place to center Baltimore's Black history and to develop creative placemaking for current and future Black creatives.

Objective: Utilize marketing & communications to coordinate the District's program and efforts for stakeholder outreach.

Objective: Plan for annual town halls and/or other regular communications to update stakeholders on progress and news in the district.

Objective: Recruit local creatives as paid promoters to promote events of the Black Arts District.

Objective: Launch an updated Black Arts District website.

Objective: Share annual report with stakeholders.

Goal 2: Create opportunities in the District through arts, culture and activities for meaningful connection among Black creatives, aspiring Black creatives, youth and adults from the West Baltimore community.

Objective: Partner for a wide range of events, trainings, meetings and gatherings in the Black Arts District to attract people as a means of further developing the culture of the District.

Objective: Create a welcoming environment with wayfinding signage, recognizable volunteers, clear parking instructions, outdoor lighting, etc.

Objective: Develop an artist registry of local Black creatives for the public to have access to as a comprehensive, searchable online directory of local Black performance, visual, body, literary, and culinary artists, as well as makers and cultural bears in Baltimore City.

Objective: Increase opportunities in the District for art installations and artistic experiences that uplift Black creatives and promote tourism through the Historical Photography Project.

Partnership Enhancement & Programming

Goal 1: Further develop and leverage meaningful partnerships with community stakeholders to enhance the District culturally and historically with the arts for youth and adults.

Objective: Utilize a partnership strategy for targeted outreach and careful selection of partners.

Objective: Develop relationships with and connect artists to churches and other organizations that may have space in the district that can be used for artist work space, performances, galleries and events.

Goal 2: Develop volunteers as means to increase organizational capacity and to expand on outreach for the organization.

Objective: Develop a volunteer training so that they can provide support and are well-versed as ambassadors about the organization.

Objective: Expand a high-quality volunteer pool.

Goal 3: Curate and promote experiences that encourage culture, creativity, connection and celebration by engaging creatives, youth, adults, community members and visitors.

Objective: Share an annual events and happenings schedule.

Objective: Actively invite and entice people to the District with engaging and distinctive events.

Objective: Engage community members living and frequenting the District by partnering with community associations.

Objective: Increase acknowledgement of Black creatives historically and currently through monuments, programming, etc.

Goal 5: Support Black creatives to reach their creative and economic potential through exposure and learning opportunities

Objective: Assess resources for artist mentorships, apprenticeships and other skill sharing.

Objective: Connect artists to home ownership in the District.

Objective: Offer technical assistance and training to Black creatives to support their creative endeavors which also provide benefit to the community.

Advocacy

Goal 1: Champion policies and practices that lead to a more informed, empowered and culturally equitable Baltimore

Objective: Target relationships with HBCUs and arts organizations to make them aware of the talents, needs and struggles of Black creatives.

Objective: Develop an artist pay standard for Baltimore creatives.

Objective: Serve as a leader on Baltimore's annual arts plan with the Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts.

Objective: Serve as advocate for any arts related initiatives in the state and city that affect Black creatives.

Objective: Serve as an advocate for Black children to have equitable access to art through Baltimore City Public Schools.

Objective: Utilize art as advocacy through truth telling and creative expression.

Objective: Enhance the vibrancy of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor by supporting development and home ownership.

Organizational Growth & Sustainability

Goal 1: Improve internal operations to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the organization

Objective: Solidify systems of internal operations for the organization for both staff and board.

Objective: Develop and utilize annual work plans for each staff member each year.

Objective: Offer employee feedback regularly.

Goal 2: Strive for growth and improvement by conducting programmatic and organizational evaluation regularly

Objective: Use an evaluation framework to measure success and impact in programming

Objective: Conduct a board self-evaluation annually.

Goal 3: Support and strengthen the staff and board to maximize success as a new and growing organization

Objective: Maintain a work place with work-life balance, wellness, self-care and positive team culture at the forefront. Develop a wellness plan for the organization as a whole and encourage this of individual team members.

Objective: Offer professional development opportunities to staff and board on a regular basis.

Objective: Assess capacity of the organization on an annual basis.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

There is a great deal of work from many stakeholders that is part of creating a strategic plan. The pitfall in such a process is that the plan is not utilized once completed. In order to ensure this plan is implemented, several tactical steps are being taken:

- Training session offered by the Consultant to board and staff, once the plan is finalized, to share resources, tools and best practices
- Use of a progress tracking system for the strategic plan, detailed and dashboard levels, shared by the Consultant
- Work plans created and utilized by the staff, templates and instructions shared by the Consultant; plan for staff progress updates
- Develop a board calendar to include strategic plan progress assessments at board meetings quarterly
- Continued availability of the consultant for check-ins, resource sharing, problem-solving

Appendices

Appendix A: Black Arts District Overview



About Us

The Pennsylvania Black Arts and Entertainment District, Inc. affectionately called the Black Arts District is a non profit organization fiscally sponsored by Druid Heights Community Development Corporation. On July 1, 2019, The state of Maryland designated the Black Arts District as the 4th A & E district in Baltimore city, but the only arts district focused on celebrating and supporting African American cultural productions in the state of Maryland. The Black Arts District's footprint is 149 acres in West Baltimore, primarily traveling along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor. The northernmost boundary is Fulton Avenue + Pennsylvania Avenue; the Southernmost boundary is Dolphin Street + Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mission:
To continue the revitalization efforts of West Baltimore through culture, arts, and entertainment.

Vision
The Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts & Entertainment District is THE choice destination for high-quality arts, culture, food, and entertainment in Baltimore. Our rich culture and legacy of community building and black autonomy continues through enhanced cultural production, historic preservation, and social development. Our work is centered in Love, Unity, Shared Purpose, and Respect for our People.

Values:
Love for our people, Black/African Centered, Unity, Creativity, Legacy

Events & Activities Curating and promoting experiences that encourage creativity, connection and celebration. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idea Summit Series• Culture Crawl• Baltimore Black Artist Fair	Training & Development Supporting local creatives and cultural institutions to achieve their creative and economic potential. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative Internship Program• Artist Spotlight• Workshops and Residencies
Advocacy & Education Championing policies and practices that lead to a more informed, empowered, and culturally equitable Baltimore. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayoral Forum• Baltimore Citywide Art Plan• Baltimore Cultural + Equity Report	Creative Placemaking Using art and culture to shape the physical and social character of west Baltimore. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Banner Pole Installation• Developing Arts Hubs• Activating Green Spaces

2

Appendix B: Map of the District

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Northern Boundary

Fulton Avenue & Pennsylvania Avenue

Southern Boundary

Dolphin Street and Pennsylvania Avenue

Western Boundary

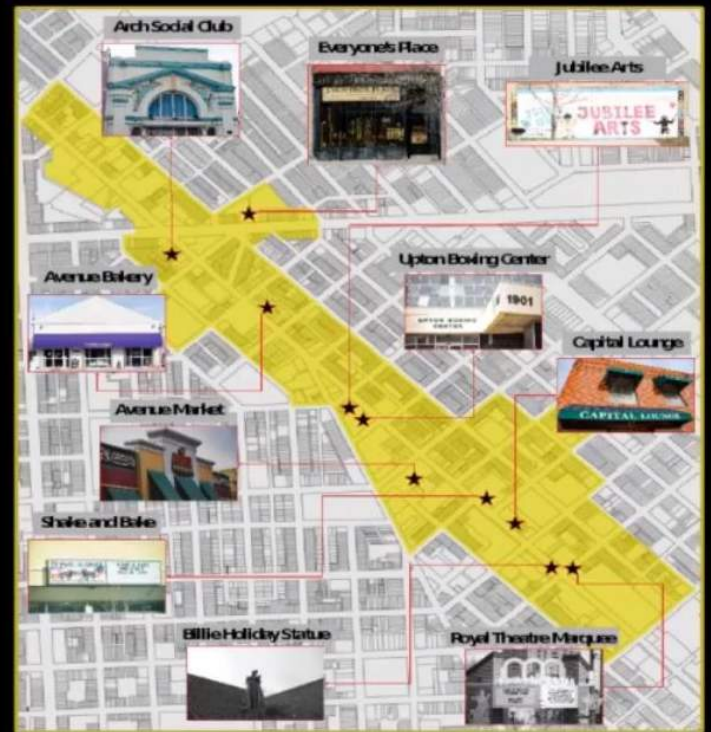
Fremont Street

Eastern Boundary

McCulloh Street

Neighborhoods

- Penn North Upton
- Druid Heights
- Upton
- Sandtown-Winchester



Appendix C: Community Engagement Report

[Link to Report](#)

Appendix D: SOAR Analysis

About a SOAR Analysis



A strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results (SOAR) analysis is a strategic planning tool that focuses an organization on its current strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals.

When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

- What are our greatest strengths?
- What are our best opportunities?
- What is our preferred future?
- What are the measurable results that will tell us we've achieved our vision of the future?

Black Arts District Areas of Focus

Events & Activities -Curating and promoting experiences that encourage creativity, connection and celebration

Training & Development- Supporting local creatives and cultural institutions to achieve their creative and economic potential

Advocacy & Education- Championing policies and practices that lead to a more informed, empowered and culturally equitable Baltimore

Creative Placemaking - Using art and culture to shape the physical and social character of West Baltimore. This includes community development projects

Discussion Notes: SOAR Analysis

Strengths

- Events & Activities -
 - A history of successful events/parades/art fairs and plans to offer more dynamic programming in the future that highlights the history of accomplishment on Penn Ave and within the Black Arts District
 - Alliances with established Black owned- businesses/orgs on Penn Ave
 - Strong creative leadership -- accomplished Staff -- well recognized team/leadership
 - Folks in organization and on the board are connected
 - Diversity of background and expertise, we set low goals, but get overwhelming support
 - Our focus on Black creatives, adaptable and flexible in many climates
 - Direct support
 - Black organization that does not discourage folks who are not Black

- Execution of marketing and presentation to community and public
- Training & Development
 - Emphasis and intention by organization to have strong training and development
 - Desire for the organization to provide training and development opportunities to community
 - Desire to create strong policies and procedures in place for Board and Organization
 - We have skills within our team to provide any training needed
 - We have team members who can connect us with other resources/funding sources
 - Creative Internship program offers real, genuine on the job experienced
 - Ability to learn and teach as we work together
 - Black Artist Fair
- Advocacy & Education
 - Development of Sanaa Center to serve as a site for advocacy and education
 - Staff and board, ie: board members who can navigate public policy
 - Understanding of pedagogy and education advocacy
 - Selfless vs selfish sharing and support for all Black artists
 - Opportunities to connect and build relationships with policy experts and elected officials on political agendas to stabilize the community as property values rise as a result of more attraction to BAD.
- Creative Placemaking
 - Placed alongside with other orgs, such as Mainstreet and Baltimore National Heritage Area (BNHA)
 - Involving community with input, ability to create processes to gather input
 - Restoration of the Wall of Pride
 - Thinking about first large scale development project in beginning stages of organization

Opportunities

- Events & Activities
 - Desire to connect with more youth organizations and/or broker institutional partnerships
 - Broadening events and activity offerings to a greater demographic of Black art creatives in the city
 - Marketing/Branding
 - A need to develop stronger pipelines through programming and partnerships to support funding streams /opportunities for artists
 - The opportunity to have events where people are learning
 - International opportunities to connect with Black artists throughout the diaspora
 - Partnering and seeking to establish relationships with orgs seeking to have events/activities in the district
 - Expand tour series
 - Historical activities
 - Allows to share resources, finances, and networks with the partners we bring in

- Attract corporate and national funding to support the work
 - Develop a real clear sense of BAD’s relationship to corporations. When we start talking about advocacy that will challenge major corporations this may present a challenge/tension but something to discuss.
- Seek out large funding that would fund a fellowship program (residency, art installations, etc.) for artists to be artists in BAD.

- Training & Development
 - Expand training and development opportunities, with emphasis on branding, financial literacy, and resource sharing for artists/creatives in the region (post-COVID)
 - Desire to connect with more youth organizations and/or broker institutional partnerships to ensure that youth creatives are supported
 - Develop a fee for service structure that’ll allow BAD to sustain itself est itself as an expert in Black Arts
 - Helping artists to find dollars and develop their own agency
 - Opportunity to add artist agency through technical assistance, marketing support, and branding development
 - Connect with Morgan State architecture program (and similar fields) to expand the conversation of art and how it can show up in a variety of career paths
 - Connecting the expertise who can train, develop, and incubate new creative enterprises
 - Connecting more to technology and expanding our use of tech as related to artistic/creative expression

- Advocacy & Education
 - Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions in the regions including HBCUs (Coppin + Morgan) and PWIs
 - Identify policies that impact Black creatives and teaching artists -- knowledge sharing
 - Countering the ways art is used to gentrify communities
 - Advocate for MSAC and other granting organizations to have cultural competence training
 - Enhance platform to create more awareness about what Black artists are doing (billboarding, etc.)
 - Incorporate art into advocacy and activism (E.g. testimonies in the form of poems, etc.). This is referred to as “Artivism.”
 - Share our story, advocating for the space we’re creating and what’s possible for the future

- Creative Placemaking
 - More opportunities for dynamic art installations in district that supports tourism to the district as well as pride in district
 - Countering the ways art is used to gentrify communities
 - Partnership with DOT and BCPS to do art-based wayfinding stencils that help communities navigate assets, or green routes, or “safe” routes for youth to walk to school, etc. Or traffic calming tactics, etc.
 - Sanaa center and all of the entities that will be connected to BAD and potential for skill development

- New funding streams

Aspirations

- **Events & Activities**
 - The development of an annual BAD Arts Festival/Fair that is comparable to Artscape
 - First Saturdays events, booths, performances that highlight local businesses + partnerships to support those events
 - The creation of events and gallery space in the Sanaa Center to support Black creatives in the region
 - Sanaa Center -- commercial kitchen, share work spaces/office spaces, creative classrooms, gallery
 - More recognition projects -- monuments, programming, acknowledgment of the history of Black creative accomplishments
 - Utilize more of the outdoor/vacant spaces in the BAD district for programming/performances/events
 - Folks can come to space for planning/events, to create
 - Pop Up Sessions, Discourse communities for artists ('ArtCourse')
 - Seasonal Festivals , giving folks a place to congregate and enjoy art
 - Artscape as a means to help support the Black Arts District
 - Hosting a Speaker Series networking event where a creative does a short keynote, with varied types of speakers
 - Annual highly anticipated event
 - Having a gallery/space where artists can host exhibitions
 - Showcasing the Black Arts Scene with a specific effort to introduce people to new artists
 - Residency Program
 - Mural Tour
- **Training & Development**
 - City and State support for youth advocacy training that happens in BAD district
 - Sanaa Center -- commercial kitchen, share work spaces/office spaces, creative classrooms,
 - Regular workshops/training for Black creatives about Business, Financial literacy, contracts, legal issues etc. (Possible long term partnership with Maryland Lawyers for the Arts)
 - That we become masters at the quality of the art being produces
 - Stretch out our understanding of what is art
 - Create a network/pipeline/ecosystem of artist and craftsman development, ie apprenticeships
 - Being able to go in an out of homes, businesses, knowing who is creating the art based on styles
 - Residency Program that could offer low cost classes
- **Advocacy & Education**
 - Development of artist housing and/or live/work spaces in the BAD district for Black creatives

- Stronger partnerships with schools and community stakeholders to ensure stronger community engagement
- Develop market analysis to determine what artists deserve to be paid in Baltimore City
- Creative Placemaking
 - Development of artist housing and/or live/work spaces in the BAD district for Black creatives
 - Sanaa Center -- commercial kitchen, share work spaces/office spaces, creative classrooms, gallery
 - Build amphitheater or outdoor performance space in one or several of outdoor/vacant spaces in the BAD district for programming/performances/events
 - Connecting artists to homeownership
 - To have selling points for homes in the District/West Baltimore like “comes with art from Black Artist
 - Purchasing properties where artists may live, visit
 - Connecting with churches in community for partnership
 - Integrated museums throughout the community (E.g. row homes throughout the communities that house pieces of history...also encourages people to get outside of their communities to explore/connect with other neighborhoods)

Results

- Events & Activities
 - Growth in attendance at events -- collection/monitoring of those numbers -- Review of both is essential to understanding if community needs/desires/expectations are met
 - Results based accountability metrics: Three major measurement frameworks (1)How much, (2) How well, (3)What’s changed-- behavior
 - Consistent tracking of participation in events -- paying attention to trends related to attendance -- how it affects donations, participation in future events, etc
 - Growth in Sponsorship opportunities mission oriented partnerships also a measurement tool to define
 - When community says we are doing well
 - When people come through and gain new skills and develop them
 - When people perform on stages provided by BAD for the first time
 - A percentage of budget goes to directly supporting creatives
 - Community promotes events and activities for us
 - Arts district and the registry are resources
 - The measurement of our reach
 - International Recognition
 - We will have relationships with and connections to Black Art Collectors
- Training & Development
 - Internal (Organization) vs External (Community)
 - Create results metrics based on where people want to be rather than where they need to be
 - We’ll have low levels of dependence on corporate support
 - A significant grassroots donor base

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- Advocacy & Education
 - Bills introduced
 - Courses created or classes generated
 - Policy changes/ a shift in policy due to work from Black Arts District
 - Thought leaders about not having arts district lead to gentrification
 - Become a grantmaking body

- Creative Placemaking
 - Locations created, especially as related to official, historical, cultural, or community acknowledged
 - We can accomplish all our goals inside our own district
 - We can measure the number of connections BAD creates that leads to new artists/creative enterprises in the district
 - We are centering Baltimore's Black history in our work

Appendix E: Strategic Planning Committee

Board & Staff

Shvilla Rasheem	Board President
John Harris	Board Vice President
Candace Chance	Board Member
Janetta Gilmore	Board Member
Dayvon Love	Board Member
Lady Brion Gill	Executive Director
Angela Carroll	Staff Member
Candace Handy	Staff Member

Consultant Team

Saida Agostini	Community Engagement Consultant
Troy Burton	Strategic Planning Associate Consultant, KS Solutions Consulting
Kate Scherr-Adams	Strategic Planning Consultant, KS Solutions Consulting

Appendix F: Strategic Planning Timeline

Process Step	Activity	Deliverable	Date	Conducted By
Getting Started	Client meeting	Plan and facilitate the meeting as well as produce notes and follow-up tasks based on the conversation	1/25	Consultant (meeting with ED)
	Document review	Read materials, ask clarifying questions of team, better understanding overall will be gained by consultant	2/3-2/12	Consultants
Determine Position	Strategic plan kickoff	Plan and facilitate meeting, produce notes and follow-up tasks based on the discussion	2/22	Consultants (with planning team as participants)
	Data Collection & Analysis	Interviews, focus groups, surveys	March	Consultant with advisement of planning team
	Final report on data collected	Memo on findings	4/11	Consultant
Develop Strategy	Planning Retreat	Plan and facilitate retreat. Following the session, the consultant will share comprehensive and organized notes, with themes and strategic issues outlined. Content used to start developing a written plan.	April 17, 12-4 PM	Consultants plan and facilitate (with planning team as participants)
Build the Plan	Draft plan	Create a full draft plan with priorities, goals and objectives including measures to evaluate success.	May	Consultant
	Finalize Plan	Submit a final plan once all input is given from the team. (include measurable outcomes and alignment with budget)	June	Consultant (with input of planning team)
Manage Performance	Implementation Training	Plan and facilitate training sessions. Provide guidance and tools to assist with implementing the plan over the coming years.	June	Consultant (with planning team as participants)