



DRAFT

Business Plan

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II. Executive Summary

Row Chabot (RC) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose purpose is to provide recreational and competitive programs in rowing at Lake Chabot Park, located in Castro Valley, California. Through a long term partnership with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), recreational operator at Lake Chabot, the primary goal of RC is to develop and oversee after-school programs in rowing for local middle and high school aged youth (grades 8-12) residing in a target service area located in urban and unincorporated southern Alameda County. Programs for adults and persons who are blind or have other physical disabilities are also long-range objectives of RC.

Rowing is a unique team-oriented sport that offers tremendous benefits, particularly for youth. Rowing fosters responsibility, teamwork and cooperation, all important life skills. In addition, rowing programs provide the opportunity for participation in a competitive sport to those who may not have extensive prior athletic experience, and may therefore be excluded from more common sports at the high school level. Increased physical activity would have particular benefit for the youth in communities surrounding Lake Chabot: the target service area for RC programs coincides with the Eden Township Area, including the cities of Hayward and San Leandro, and the unincorporated communities of Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, Hillcrest Knolls, Fairmont Terrace and El Portal Ridge. As a whole, the youth in these communities are underserved in terms of recreational opportunities and fare poorly on standardized fitness tests conducted within public schools across the State of California. Rowing programs also have a high rate of college admissions and scholarship for high school aged participants, and attract many recruiters from Division I schools.

Operating at capacity, RC can provide a daily after-school physical activity outlet for up to 60 middle and high-school aged youth. A larger storage facility (e.g. container) would substantially increase this capacity.

Currently in the East Bay area, the only place that rowing can be learned is in Oakland. Youth residing in the RC target service area surrounding Lake Chabot are largely excluded from participation in existing rowing programs given transportation obstacles and restrictions on who can participate. Furthermore all existing programs are at capacity, the largest (in Oakland) already serving more than 200 high school aged athletes. Oakland's youth facilities and programs are currently being expanded, in part due to support from the EBRPD in securing grant funding for existing rowing clubs in that area. Row Chabot's goal is to make participation in rowing programs accessible to a whole new population of young people in an area that is particularly in need of enhanced recreational opportunities. Our program would also be unique in offering participation to middle school aged (8th grade) students. Based on direct experience of other start-up rowing programs in the greater Bay Area, RC expects to reach the current capacity of 60 youth in after-school programs within about three to four years.

RC was incorporated in 2003 and a long-term lease agreement was signed with EBRPD

on January 13, 2004. The lease stipulated that RC identify funding for needed capital improvements (including a new dock and gangway, landscaping and storage improvements) by January 13, 2007. Working collaboratively with the EBRPD, RC has identified approximately \$174,000 in capital funds for this project. The EBRPD has indicated a willingness to utilize existing resources to fund the remainder of the improvements in order to enable RC to focus on identifying sources of funding for start-up costs and development of an operational plan. In July 2008 the EBRPD achieved a critical milestone in completing a feasibility study, in which four alternative designs for the new dock and gangway were considered. Cost estimates of these four alternative designs range from \$476,000 to \$1.2 million.

Of an estimated \$65,000 needed for start-up costs for the youth rowing program, RC has already identified more than half (\$34,000) in funds and pro-bono services, including a \$15,000 grant from the Eden Township Healthcare District Community Fund (intended for equipment purchases), awarded in December 2006; and a \$2500 grant from the Castro Valley Sanitary District, awarded in December 2005. *RC is required to report progress annually to both of these donors, and needs to demonstrate progress in implementing programs at Lake Chabot to justify retaining these funds. In addition, to continue efforts in raising program funds, RC requires a renewed lease agreement with the EBRPD, and a commitment from the EBRPD about the timeline for completion of the facility improvements.*

RC is led by a highly motivated and qualified Board of Directors, with extensive experience in the sport of rowing. The RC Board also features expertise in grantwriting, legal affairs, athletics department administration, landscape design, program planning for disabled adults, web-based technology, insurance and realty. RC has modeled it's organizational structure after those of other successful rowing programs throughout the country. There is a detailed plan for expanding staff and adapting the structure as new programs are added and as growth of programs occurs.

As a non-profit entity devoted to providing relatively low-cost access to recreational opportunity for an underserved community, the fiscal goal of RC is focused on covering annual operating expenses and reserving a small surplus from year to year for occasional purchases of new equipment, or to provide scholarships for those unable to pay tuition for participation. Costs of operation of the youth program will be covered by income generated primarily from participation fees and, in some cases, separate scholarship monies provided by foundations and other charitable organizations and individuals. Supplemental income will be obtained through annual fundraisers and pro-bono services.

To accommodate anticipated demand for programs from other groups such as adults and persons with disabilities, additional space may need to be identified at Lake Chabot for expanded storage.

III. Overview of Organization

III.1 Mission of Row Chabot

“Bringing communities together through expanded aquatic programs on Lake Chabot”

III.2 Row Chabot Purpose and Vision:

RC is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded for the purpose of enhancing enjoyment and recreational opportunities at Lake Chabot Park by offering fee-based programs in rowing at Lake Chabot Marina, located in Castro Valley, California. RC entered into a long term partnership with the EBRPD (recreational operator of Lake Chabot Park) that allows RC to develop and oversee after-school programs in rowing for local middle and high school aged youth (grades 8-12) residing in the urban and unincorporated southern Alameda County area. The specific target population encompasses an area referred to as the Eden Township, comprised of the cities of Hayward and San Leandro, and the urban unincorporated areas of Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, Ashland, Cherryland, Fairview, Hillcrest Knolls, Fairmont Terrace, and El Portal Ridge. These communities are generally underserved in terms of aquatic recreational opportunities due to socioeconomic disadvantage and, in some cases, due to the lack of municipal infrastructure to advocate for improved services. At capacity, our year-round after-school programs will serve up to 60 young people each year, five days per week, with some weekend sessions as well.

The type of rowing that would be offered by RC requires specialized equipment. The boats, called ‘shells’ or ‘sculls’ are long, thin and fragile, and made for 1, 2, 4 or 8 persons (see Rowing Equipment Specifications, Appendix 3). There are two major types of rowing: sculling (where each rower uses two oars) and sweep (where each rower uses only one oar, on alternating sides). In the larger sweep boats, there is a ‘coxswain’ who steers the boat and gives commands to the rowers. This type of rowing is performed competitively at many colleges and universities, including the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. Rowing is also an Olympic sport and several athletes who trained in the Bay Area have gone on to compete in the Olympic Games or in Junior or Open World Championships.

The RC mission and vision are closely aligned with the core mission of our partners, the EBRPD, which states: ***“We will acquire, develop, manage, and maintain a high quality, diverse system of interconnected parklands which balances public usage and education programs with protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources”***. RC programs would complement the mission of EBRPD by enhancing access to healthful recreational boating activities, while preserving the natural resources of the parklands for the future generations that will continue to enjoy them. A major priority of the EBRPD (as stated in the Master Plan 1997) is to improve access to, and use of, the parks by members of groups that have been underrepresented, such as disabled, economically disadvantaged and elderly visitors. RC programs would specifically target underrepresented groups, such as those residing

in underserved and often economically disadvantaged areas within Eden Township. In addition to youth programs, RC intends to offer weekend fee-based instructional classes in rowing for youth and adults (ages 13 and older). The long-term vision would also include ongoing programs for masters (post high-school) and persons with physical disabilities, for whom there are no rowing programs currently offered by any other club within the greater Bay Area.

III.3 Benefits of Rowing for Youth

Rowing is a unique team sport that has particular appeal for youth, many of whom may not be attracted to more common sports. Furthermore, it is difficult for inactive middle- and high-school aged youth to become involved in sports programs because most school-based sports (such as soccer, football, basketball, etc) involve tryouts and are therefore exclusive to those with prior experience. Therefore those in greatest need of physical activity programs have poor access to such opportunities. In addition, participation in recreational activity outside of the school can be quite expensive or require transportation, which presents a barrier for many young people. In general, the earliest one can learn rowing is in high school. Because of this later age of starting the sport, compared to many youth sport programs, it gives high school girls and boys the opportunity to learn a sport and immediately apply these new skills at the competitive level.

Obesity increased dramatically during the 1990's, from 12% in 1991 to nearly 18% in 1998. The greatest increase was observed in young people (18 to 29 year olds). Relative to many communities within the state of California, for youth residing within the Eden Township area there are fewer outlets for physical activity. This problem is illustrated by the fitness testing results compiled by the California Department of Education, which outlines six fitness standards that are tested in all grade levels in California's public schools. For the 2004-05 school year, 38% of 9th grade students in the Hayward Unified School District (the largest school district within the ETHD) met 3 or fewer fitness standards (compared to 28% statewide). One of the test components is aerobic capacity, which assesses the capacity of the cardiorespiratory system by measuring endurance. This test is perhaps the most important indicator of physical fitness and involves a one mile walk/run that is scored in minutes and seconds, and by measuring heart rate. On this test, only 42.5% of Hayward Unified 9th graders were scored in the Healthy Fitness Zone as compared to a statewide average of 50.9%. Based on 2006 testing results, according to a recent article in the Daily Review (November 18, 2006) approximately 40% of students in Castro Valley were able to do all six of the required tests, while only 29% of San Lorenzo students and 27% of San Leandro students passed the test. Hayward fared especially poorly, with only 16% passing the test. These statistics illustrate a critical need for expanded access to recreational programs within our local community, particularly for youth.

College admissions and scholarships represent another major benefit offered by rowing programs. Many colleges have competitive rowing programs, but relative to most other sports fewer high school athletes participate in rowing. Therefore, young people who

participate in rowing at the high school level have a tremendous advantage in terms of collegiate scholarship opportunities. A great example of this was the 1992 Berkeley High School Boys' rowing team, a multi-cultural squad which graduated three seniors, all of whom were minorities who had required financial assistance in order to participate in their high school rowing program. The investment in these young athletes had tremendous reward, as all three landed partial or full-ride scholarships to participate in rowing programs at top universities: Princeton University, Wesleyan University, and the University of Oregon. The future of these individuals could have been very different had they not discovered rowing. One of these young men, a refugee from Nicaragua, later wrote:

"Imagine a 16 year old boy who has nothing to do but sit around after school. Most of these kids end up on the streets. I was lucky to go to Berkeley High, a school with a very strong rowing program... I deeply believe that if it had not been for rowing I would have never made it to college. I became disciplined and worried more about doing well in school and doing well for my team than about going out on the streets causing trouble".

The Berkeley High School Rowing Team continues to attract recruiters from division I colleges and universities. There are many demographic similarities between the West Berkeley community and the communities within Eden Township, where admission to division 1 colleges is relatively uncommon.

Participation in high school rowing programs is an especially good avenue towards college admission and scholarship for female athletes: in 1972 the federal government passed Title IX of the Education Amendments to prohibit sex discrimination in educational programs. One of the biggest impacts has been on the growth of women's sports in colleges. Of that growth, the largest up and coming sport is rowing. In the NCAA, a Division I rowing program is able to offer up to 20 full ride scholarships for women. Women's rowing has helped to balance the scholarships offered in football. In the major football scholarship schools, it is not unusual to find a women's rowing program with over 60 student-athletes.

III.4 Location/Facilities

RC programs will be conducted at Lake Chabot Marina, Lake Chabot Park, in Castro Valley, California. Lake Chabot is a popular park that is easily accessible by car, bicycle, or public transportation. It draws visitors from a broad service area including Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and beyond. Based on a 1997 Fall Survey conducted by the EBRPD, 15% of all individuals or groups visiting the park had at least one party member from outside of Alameda and Contra Costa County. Park attendance figures for 2001 and 2002 based on visual counts by park personnel are estimated at 229,393 and 159,121, respectively. Fishing, hiking, biking and picnicking are popular activities at the park. Rental boats currently available at the lake (including fishing boats with 1-hp engines, paddle boats, traditional 'row' boats and canoes) are underutilized during the weekdays and do not encourage boating as a physical activity.

Lake Chabot is under the ownership of the East Bay Municipal Utilities District

(EBMUD). Under a long-term operating agreement with the EBMUD, the EBRPD is the designated recreational operator of Lake Chabot, and is thereby responsible for maintenance of facilities, staffing, and operations of programs at the park. In January 2004, RC entered into a long-term lease agreement with the EBRPD, whereby RC would utilize facilities (and necessary improvements) owned by EBRPD to operate its programs. Since then, RC and EBRPD have collaborated in generating part of the funding necessary for facility improvements at the proposed site, including a public access gangway and dock suitable for launching rowing craft, equipment storage accommodations, and landscaping. The initial lease agreement between EBRPD and RC expired in January 2007 and has not yet been renewed, although EBRPD has indicated their intent to establish a new operating agreement with RC.

In July, 2008, the EBRPD achieved an important milestone in the completion of a feasibility study which included cost estimates of four alternative designs for the proposed facility improvements that would accommodate the programs proposed by RC. Cost estimates for these four alternatives ranged from \$476,000 to \$1.2 million. EBRPD has indicated that a final decision regarding the design would be made by the end of 2008.

Based on a highly successful collaboration between RC and the EBRPD, approximately \$174,000 in capital funds has been identified through the California Department of Boating and Waterways, the County of Alameda, and other sources. Depending on the design that is selected, considerable funding is still required before the facility improvements are fully funded.

Rowing equipment acquired and/or purchased and owned by RC for use in its programs (including rowing shells and oars) will be stored underneath the café/concessions building at Lake Chabot Marina. The coach's motor launch will be moored or stored near other motor launches already moored at the marina. The proposed location of the new dock is situated nearby (refer to Feasibility Study, separate document). Alternative designs and locations of the dock are also being considered. Restrooms are a short walk from the launching area.

Lake Chabot is an ideal venue for aquatic programs given the scenic surroundings and natural protection from the wind. Speedboats are prohibited, making this a very safe environment for learning. However, according to a 1997 Fall Survey conducted by the East Bay Regional Park District, at present recreational boating accounts for less than 2% of activities among park visitors. Launching of private boats is permitted, but the existing facilities are not optimal, particularly when water elevations are at the high or low mark.

The sports of rowing and fishing have co-habitated on lakes, rivers, harbors and reservoirs throughout America for over 200 years. Rowing programs operate successfully on bodies of water considerably smaller than Lake Chabot, such as Berkeley's Aquatic Park (serving at least 50 primarily adult rowers and kayakers); Lake Merced in South San Francisco (serving two junior programs and approximately 200

