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## 2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

### Background and Approach

Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association & Arts Center (BRMAA) has developed a strategic plan to identify what the organization must accomplish if it is successfully serving the community over the next five years.

In developing this strategic plan we first completed a detailed analysis of the future environment we expect to exist in over the next five years, receiving input from various stakeholders—staff, board members, volunteers, artists, community members, elected officials, and community members. The activity enabled the development key planning assumptions that address key aspects of BRMAA's operations—mission and programming, internal processes, organizational capital, and financial—in order to maximize our ability to be successful as we move forward.

Based on these key assumptions, we next identified what BRMAA must look like with respect to each assumption if we were to be an effectively operating organization. These strategic priorities, or goals, enable us to articulate what we will look like in the future in our most successful state.

With these strategic goals clarified, BRMAA then identified the measurable objectives that must be completed in order to achieve the respective goals. The objectives also inform the key initiatives and projects that must be executed if the organization is to successfully achieve the full intent and scope of the objectives, and, subsequently, its mission.

### Our Future Environment

In a region whose revenue and population growth are driven by influxes of individuals—both in short-term tourism and long-term resettlement—Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association will adapt to meet the needs of this growing demographic, while maintaining its service to the roots of the local community.

By 2020, the Georgia Office of Planning & Budget projects a 10.2% increase from Fannin County's 2013's population. This change would represent the fastest growth since the 1990s. Driving the increase, are older adults (45 years and older) while younger individuals (19 and below) will decline. This illustrates the growing importance of migrants to the region, whether retirees, part-time residents, or tourists (including art enthusiasts!) who never leave.

At the same time, BRMAA has an opportunity to contribute to the growth and vibrancy of this rich community, fostering a stronger local economy and a reputation as a top art town. Finding ways to drive tourism and improve the well-being of Blue Ridge and the surrounding areas can create economic opportunity, retaining younger families and individuals in a region with higher than average unemployment and lower incomes. The demonstrable benefits of arts programming on individuals and communities are clear, and, through BRMAA, North Georgia will continue to reap their positive impacts.

But to get to that point, BRMAA will need to institutionalize its internal processes, secure the human and technological infrastructure, build rapport with and buy-in from the broader community, expand its arts-centric services, and ensure its financial sustainability. With these core goals in mind, BRMAA has embarked on a journey to strategically create a future that sees a Blue Ridge as a flourishing Art Town—not just a destination for arts and culture, but home to a prospering community. Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association will take steps based on the following key assumptions as we strategically plan on reaching our vision.

## Environmental Scan

Through interviews and focus groups with various stakeholder groups, BRMAA has found that the following identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) will influence how the organization operates or adapts in the future environment.

### Strengths (internal environment):

- BRMAA offers diverse programming that can be further built upon
- The staff and leadership are passionate about the organization's mission, and works tirelessly to produce high-quality programming
- Blue Ridge, Fannin County, and the surrounding areas are inhabited by many talented and passionate artists and art enthusiasts

### Weaknesses (internal environment):

- BRMAA can do a better job of engaging young audiences outside of Youth Art Month
- The Association's operational and budgeting processes are not well documented or transparent
- BRMAA is understaffed in key areas
- BRMAA will need to be perceived as more accessible as the general public

### Opportunities (external environment):

- There is a growing movement toward community-centric public art
- Tourism and retirees will continue to come to Blue Ridge
- There are untapped markets in BRMAA's target geographic reach for patrons, partnerships, and sponsorships
- Implementing innovative technology can streamline processes and reach new audiences

### Threats (external environment):

- The growing economic disparity in the region can negatively impact engagement of potential consumers
- Some real estate assets represent potential financial and/or legal risks to the organization
- Without increased and more diversified funding streams, the organization will be less likely to remain sustainable

## Balanced Scorecard Approach

In developing this strategic plan, the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association utilized the balanced scorecard as the strategic framework for identifying a broad set of objectives and initiatives to be accomplished. The four operational aspects include the following:

**Mission Perspective:** In this perspective we have identified what success looks like externally to the community and our key stakeholders.

**Internal Process Perspective:** The perspective identifies what we must accomplish internally with respect to our key business processes if we are to be able to achieve the objectives in the mission perspective.

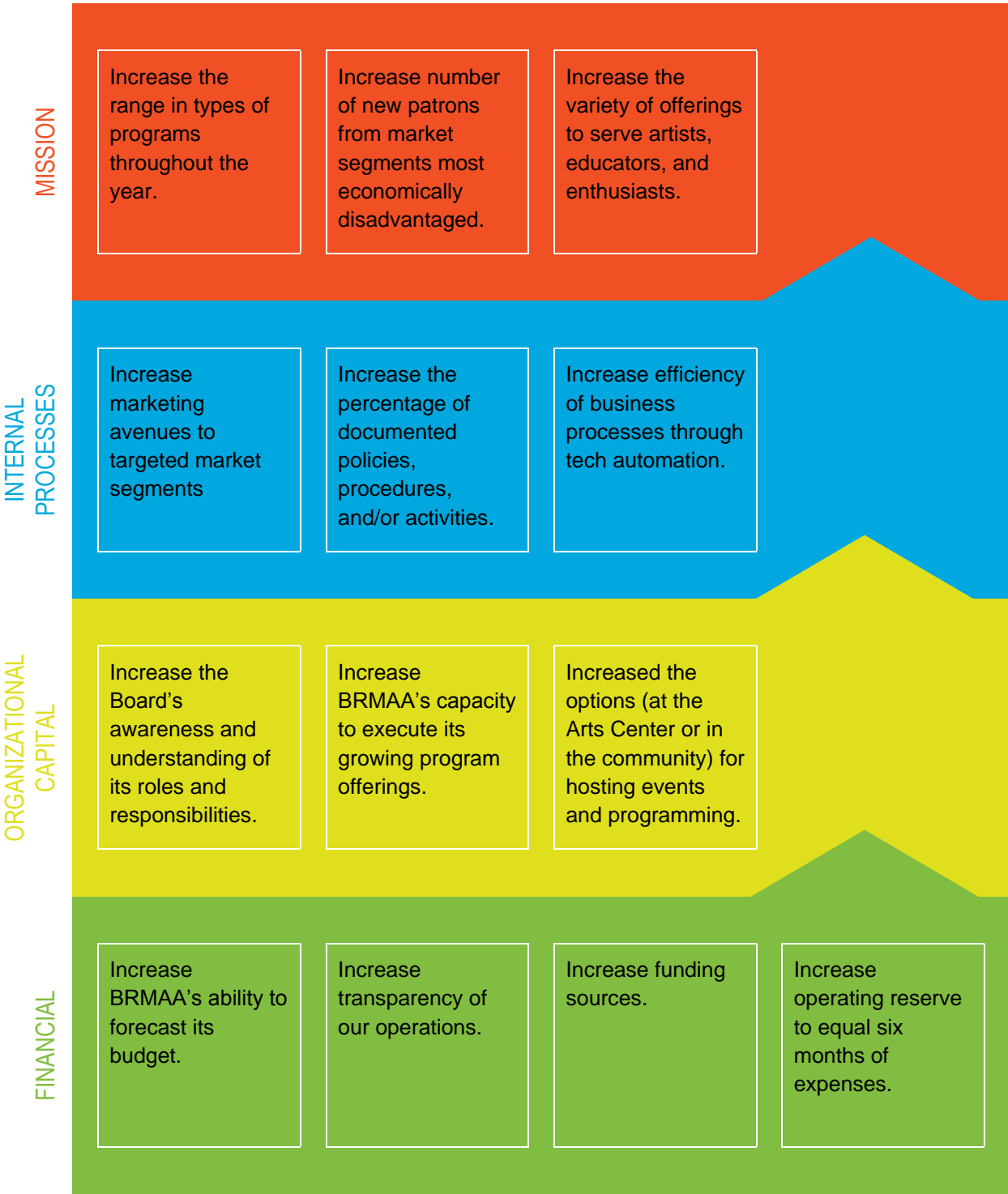
**Organizational Capital Perspective:** Objectives and initiatives within this perspective identify what our work force and technology capabilities need to be in the future if we are to efficiently run our key business processes and effectively communicate to the community.

**Financial Perspective:** This perspective identifies what financial resources we will need to operate BRMAA as well as to strategic invest in the future of the organization. It also identifies how we must manage our resources if we are to be able to get the most value of our services to our stakeholders and supporters

## Participants

The Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association offers sincere thanks to all the staff, board members, volunteers, and external stakeholders who participated in the accomplishment of this five-year strategic plan.

# Balanced Scorecard Strategy Map



## Mission Perspective:

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
<p>Focused and diversified programming (classes, exhibits, events, public awareness) will best engage our customers (children/families, adults) and artists.</p>	<p>We have diversified programming that meets the interests of all our stakeholders throughout the year.</p>	<p>Increase the range in types of programs throughout the year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a system of cataloging programs</li> <li>• Survey the people of Blue Ridge</li> <li>• Collect and utilize data &amp; feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Class Catalog &amp; Establish Instructor database</li> <li>• Survey using chamber database, YAM, AIP and social media</li> <li>• Survey driven data; Attendance data; Class survey; event survey</li> </ul>
<p>The growing economic gap in our area can negatively impact the engagement of certain stakeholders</p>	<p>We have made our programs accessible and affordable to all community members</p>	<p>Increase number of new patrons from market segments most economically disadvantaged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify financially feasible ways to include low-income patrons</li> <li>• Explore community partnerships to increase program accessibility</li> <li>• Develop Patron development program to identify various patron stakeholders (e.g. business sponsorship, art collectors, endowment, ticket sales)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor ship &amp; Partnership development; Grants; GiveBack programming</li> <li>• Joint Fundraisers; Community Art Therapy; Public Art programs; UNG partnerships</li> <li>• Board committee development; specialized events &amp; programming for stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p>Enhanced support and development for our artists, art educators, and art enthusiasts will further our mission.</p>	<p>We have expanded our offerings to artists, art educators, and art enthusiasts.</p>	<p>Increase the variety of offerings to serve artists, educators, and enthusiasts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety and depth of workshops (e.g. partner with colleges, other institutions)</li> <li>• Displaying and selling art and supplies</li> <li>• Integrate technology into offerings (web-based courses, store, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business of the Artist Lectures; University Partnerships (Big Read 2017); Folk School Instructor Share program</li> <li>• Satellite location; Partner Pop-up; Business Art Exchange; Mobile Art programs</li> <li>• Ecommerce; Tech based exhibit information (iPad, TV); Webinars/ Online lectures</li> </ul>

## Internal Process Perspective:

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
A strategic marketing approach will help us reach growing stakeholder groups—local artists, area residents, businesses, and tourists businesses, tourists—in our geographic target area	We have implemented a creative marketing campaign to attract new and more diverse audiences—local artists, area residents, businesses, and tourists	Increase marketing avenues (e.g. media, radio, billboards, local businesses/institutions ) to targeted market segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing campaign(s)</li> <li>Analyze marketing data</li> <li>Tracking of visitors, etc.</li> <li>Increase brand awareness via word of mouth and media outlets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-Op advertising; call to artists; long term marketing campaigns</li> <li>Google &amp; Social Media analytics; Audience reporting</li> <li>Guestbook; attendance records; social media comments</li> <li>Qtrly reporting of board recruitment; Public campaign (chamber, local media, call to volunteers; Cohesive elevator speech by board</li> </ul>
BRMAA will need to establish and/or formalize processes (including standard policies and procedures) to manage risk and ensure/enhance organizational memory	We have formalized standard policies and procedures, and implemented technology to ensure a longstanding business model for security & success	Increase the percentage of documented policies, procedures, and/or activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish task force (management/operational and board)</li> <li>Identify and list all major processes</li> <li>Document procedural steps in an accessible manuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR consulting; staff monthly meeting; establish board committee</li> <li>Draft department operational policies and procedures; Qtrly review of staff procedures</li> </ul>
Continuously focusing on technology will improve the functioning of our internal systems, delivery of services, business management, and artistic endeavors	We have implemented technology platforms to maximize business management & artistic endeavors	Increase efficiency of business processes through tech automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct technology needs assessment</li> <li>Identify functions that can be enhanced or automated by tech (jurying, attendance, etc.)</li> <li>Acquire and implement tech solutions</li> <li>Monitor software/hardware status/updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys; social media; staff survey; education assessments</li> <li>Call to Artists; Festival applications; Guest Book; Artist Bio &amp; Exhibit stations; Class Registration; Tickets Sales</li> <li>Square mobile; Retail barcoding; grants for iPads</li> <li>Scheduled updates maintenance</li> </ul>

## Organizational Capital Perspective:

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
Board development and board governance training will better support the Board in its ability to govern BRMAA	We have implemented a thorough training program for all board members	Increase the Board's awareness and understanding of its roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete board assessment annually</li> <li>• Develop board training program &amp; create training schedule (cohort or individual, frequency, etc.)</li> <li>• Disseminate board manual (developed in Internal Process #2)</li> <li>• Establish board outreach &amp; recruitment plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board survey &amp; data assessment annually</li> <li>• Annual Board training; Board Mentor program; committee efficiency review</li> <li>• See process #2</li> <li>• Create recruitment plan and committee for outreach</li> </ul>
An assessment of staffing (to include volunteers, artists, and instructors) needs, gaps, roles, and resource requirements will help BRMAA to reach its goals	We have identified BRMAA's needs and have aligned staff, volunteers, artists, and instructors with appropriate competencies to those needs	Increase BRMAA's capacity to execute its growing program offerings by establishing an efficient utilization of Board and Volunteer efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify organizational needs</li> <li>• Document and define roles and responsibilities ( e.g. volunteers) to deepen their engagement</li> <li>• Align staff to strategic goals of the organization</li> <li>• Create staff evaluation/assessment tool</li> <li>• Administer a staff, board and volunteer satisfaction survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly staff reporting; board analysis of committees and efficiency</li> <li>• Annual analysis of staff positions; employee evaluations; job descriptions; board committee assignments; volunteer duties database</li> <li>• Inform staff of strategic planning and goals; team meetings</li> <li>• Annual staff evaluation</li> <li>• Evaluations administered no less than annually</li> </ul>

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
<p>Ensuring appropriate space (at the Arts Center or in the community) will enable BRMAA to have the appropriate events, classes, and shows to fulfill its mission</p>	<p>We have secured adequate space that is appropriate for all our programming and events</p>	<p>Increased the options (at the Arts Center or in the community) for hosting events and programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze current space (availability, functionality, ADA compliance)</li> <li>• Maximize utilization of current space (basement storage, multi-use areas, etc.)</li> <li>• Reach out to community partners to identify additional space</li> <li>• Address Evans estate</li> <li>• Triage building maintenance needs and address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop &amp; analyze space utilization policy; provided required documentation like ADA and fire codes in company manual</li> <li>• Discuss space usage qtrly</li> <li>• Working list of community opportunities; satellite gallery space; identify funding for Art Town projects; continued business partnerships</li> <li>• Property appraisal and sale</li> <li>• Facilities maintenance checklist and annual assessment</li> </ul>



## Financial Perspective:

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
BRMAA's budget process needs to be aligned with and support its strategy	We are able to forecast the organizational budget to meet the mission and strategic goals of BRMAA	Increase BRMAA's ability to forecast its budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete financial assessment</li> <li>• Compare current/past budget with strategy</li> <li>• Create a process for creating and approving the budget and projections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly accounting/ treasurer report</li> <li>• P&amp;L review by executive committee qtrly</li> <li>• Training on budget process for board members</li> </ul>
Fully transparent financial processes are needed as a means of risk management, especially in regards to maintaining public funding	We have maintained our finances in a transparent way to reduce risk and maintain funds	Increase transparency of our operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure thorough and accurate financial records</li> <li>• Establish process for generation and review of financial reports, including appropriate staff and board members</li> <li>• Ensure that an audit is conducted on a scheduled basis</li> <li>• Disseminate record highlights to appropriate officials/community partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish current policy for reporting for company manual; Monthly meeting by ED and comptroller</li> <li>• ED, Comptroller and Board Treasurer will establish financial company policy and procedures</li> <li>• Company Audit will be conducted no less than every (5) years</li> <li>• Annual report provided and issued out to the public highlighting annual company information</li> </ul>
More diverse funding sources will ensure the sustainability of BRMAA	We have expanded our funding to include more diverse sources	Increase funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess revenue streams</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for new and diverse sources of funding</li> <li>• Implement most appropriate fundraising activities based on assessment (planned giving, endowments, membership, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing reconciliation and budget review</li> <li>• ED and Board work to identify partnership opportunities based on annual schedule; Recruit local banker or financial advisor to the board; Review establishing Endowment funding</li> </ul>

Key Assumption	Goal	Key Objective	Key Initiative(s)	Key Projects
A six-month operating reserve will ensure the sustainability of BRMAA in the event of any unforeseen expenses	We have established and maintain a six-month operating reserve to ensure sustainability of BRMAA	Increase operating reserve to equal six months of expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a monthly savings plan</li> <li>• Investigate bonds, selling assets (e.g. property)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earmark money market account for six month reserve</li> <li>• Consult financial advisor as needed for investment opportunities; investigate endowment options</li> </ul>

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