GORGE TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN, 2017–2021

VISION

A Columbia River Gorge region known as an innovative technology community where businesses thrive, entrepreneurs are nurtured, community members are engaged, meaningful employment is abundant, and all children have access to innovative Science, Technology, Engineering and Math opportunities.

MISSION

Support, connect and develop the technology community of the Columbia River Gorge.

CORE VALUES

The Gorge Technology Alliance will fulfill its mission and vision in accordance with the following values: Collaboration, Connection, Technology Literacy, Fun, Success, Inclusion, Innovation, Recognition, Sustainability, Community, Support, Leadership, Reliability, Credibility, Quality, Opportunity

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Based on organizational research, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board identified 4 critical goals that will be the main focus of the GTA over the next three years. The Goals represent the long-term aims we plan to achieve. Underneath each Goal, we identify key Strategies. Strategies represent the major types of activities that are being used to achieve the Goal. Action Steps outline how these Strategies will be implemented. Our goals in summary are:

1. Strengthen STEM education.

2. Increase success of member businesses.

3. Increase visibility of the Gorge as a center for high tech innovation and commerce.

4. Increase the GTA's impact and influence by increasing organizational and programmatic capacity.

PROGRAM GOALS		
GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN STEM EDUCATION.		
Goal 1 Strategies	**Who**	**When**
Strategy 1: Form STEM Committee to create Work Plan and Benchmarks that create a clear roadmap for carrying out STEM objectives.	Board	November 1, 2017 committee form, Feb 1, 2018 work plan
Action Step: Recruit members from Board, membership, and community-at-large to help design high impact STEM program across the Gorge.	Board/ ED	
Potential actions to consider: ▪ Dramatically increase resources of scholarship fund through capital campaign. ▪ Investigate models from other STEM communities. ▪ Consider partnerships that could be leveraged to meet our STEM goals.		
GOAL 2: INCREASE SUCCESS OF MEMBER BUSINESSES.		
Goal 2 Strategies	**Who**	**When**
Strategy 1: Form Business Success committee to create Work Plan and Benchmarks to prioritize, oversee and enact Goal 2 strategies.	Board/Committee	November 1, 2017 committee form, Feb 1, 2018 work plan
Strategy 2: Support business development of small to mid-size tech companies through mentorship program between businesses at different stages of evolution.	Committee/ED	
Strategy 3: Check in with mid-size to large tech companies to ensure alignment of our strategies.	Committee/ED	
Strategy 4: Provide expanded and customized support services in top three areas of highest value to members.	Committee/ED	

Potential support areas to consider:
 	
    ▪ Legal assistance
    ▪ HR services
    ▪ Health care pool
    ▪ Lists of grants, state and federal
    ▪ Business start-up assistance
    ▪ Referrals (accountants, lawyers, etc.)		

Strategy 5: Create learning/action cohorts focusing on high priority issues affecting member businesses and develop strategy to support businesses in top three areas.
 	
Consider the following areas for action/learning cohorts:
 	
    ▪ Action cohort for employee recruitment and training
    ▪ Action cohort for affordable/available housing
    ▪ Action cohort for STEM
	Committee/ED	

Strategy 6: Develop ways to advocate for issues of importance to membership that are consistent with GTA's approach (broad positions versus specific legislative solutions).
 	
Areas to consider focusing on:
 	
    ▪ Increase Internet access
    ▪ Expanding pool of available/attainable/affordable housing
	Committee/ED	

Strategy 7: Design GTA programming to develop networking opportunities and cross pollination among its members.	Committee	
Action: Apply the following query in designing all GTA programs: "How can this activity be carried out in a way that enables face-to-face discussion, personal sharing and networking?"	Board/ED	
Strategy 8: Increase member participation at events through strengthened internal communications.	Committee	
Action: Use social media (FB, Instagram, Twitter) to better advertise GTA events.	ED	

Action: Recruit communications liaisons within member businesses (with clear job description) who actively promote GTA programs.	ED	
Action: Develop and advertise incentives to attract participants.	Committee	
Action: Conduct survey or use contest to generate interesting/popular program topics.	Committee /ED	

GOAL 3: INCREASE VISIBILITY OF THE GORGE AS CENTER FOR HIGH TECH INNOVATION AND COMMERCE.

Goal 3 Strategies	Who	When
Strategy 1: Form a Communications Committee to create a Work Plan and Benchmarks to oversee and implement communications strategies.	Board/ED	November 1, 2017 committee form, Feb 1, 2018 work plan
Strategy 2: Develop a communications plan that advances GTA's strategic priorities by regularly communicating successes, goals and messages of GTA and its members. Plan distinguishes between internal and external audiences and includes: media goals, target audiences, key messages, and communications timeline. Plan leverages partnerships for greater impact. *Topics to consider communicating about:* ▪ GTA's purpose (vision, mission, goals) ▪ GTA's Strategic direction (strategic plan) ▪ How the community benefits from the tech community ▪ Gorge as regional high tech center ▪ Livability of Gorge *Areas to influence through communications:* ▪ Employee recruitment ▪ Member engagement and employee participation at events ▪ Philanthropic engagement of tech industry ▪ Housing development ▪ Infrastructure/Internet	Committee	

INSTITUTIONAL GOAL		
GOAL 4: INCREASE THE GTA'S IMPACT AND INFLUENCE BY INCREASING ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC CAPACITY.		
Goal 4 Strategies	**Who**	**When**
Strategy 1: Form Growth Committee to create Work Plan and Benchmarks to oversee GTA capacity expansion.	Board	November 1, 2017 committee form, Feb 1, 2018 work plan
Strategy 2: Create development plan with clear fundraising goals, strategies and benchmarks that generates 100% increase in revenue by 2021. Elements to consider including in GTA's Development Plan: ▪ Extending the GTA's reach to include non-traditional technology-related industries, such as medical industry. ▪ Using one-on-one visits to cultivate sponsors from existing members, and recruit new members. ▪ Adding membership category for employees of members. ▪ Raising dues. ▪ Developing new website functions that allow for contributing directly to GTA and scholarship fund online. ▪ Creating plan for managing the expanded membership pool. ▪ Create plan for evaluating potential sources of grant funding (includes: cost/benefit of pursuing these sources, and likelihood of success).	Growth Committee	

ADDENDUM

To meet the above Goals, the GTA recognizes certain preferred methods for moving forward:

1. **Partnerships**: Through strong partnerships with other community organizations, the GTA will be able to leverage shared time and funding resources in support of shared goals. The Board, Committees and staff should seek collaborations with potential alliances and natural partners among government agencies, economic development entities, peer trade associations, and educational institutions that have alignment with GTA vision, mission and goals.

2. **Engaged, Effective Leadership:** The GTA's Board is transitioning to a "working" board in support of organizational growth. This entails the Board forming Committees that match GTA's strategic goal areas to enable staff to take more of a management role, expanding the capacity of the entire organization. Committees will:
   - Have clearly defined purpose, time frame, goals, action plans
   - Have assigned point people, or chairs, who set up meetings and report progress to Jessica and the Board
   - Recruit committee members from the broader membership as well as the Board

   This also entails structuring the Board meetings to increase focus and efficacy. Ways this could be done include:

   - Use strategic plan to review, track and report on progress toward achieving goals
   - Design staff and committee reports to match strategic priorities of strategic plan.
   - Institute best practices for meetings, such as:
       - Reviewing minutes ahead of board meetings and only voting on them at meetings.
       - Clearly delineating action items in meeting minutes, and adding task tracking to meeting agendas
       - Developing reporting system that spring boards off of the strategic plan, tied to plan's benchmarks.

   Further, a working Board requires the Board President to check in with board members who miss meetings frequently or who aren't participating in committees to learn how GTA can support them in being more engaged.

   The Board will also explore ways to strengthen GTA's Board governance through annual evaluation and instituting best practices, such as:

   - Changing board meetings to quarterly—in order to allow board members to use their time serving on committees and engaged in activities that will have the greatest impact.
   - Forming executive committee to take on issues that need to happen in between meetings.
   - Reviewing officer and board member job descriptions-- to ensure that they fit with the new direction of the organization.

3. **Benchmarks**: We believe unambiguous, numerical benchmarks attached to each committee's work plan will enable the GTA to mark progress towards meeting our goals and keep the organization on track. Some potential benchmarks for goals referenced above could include:

- Number of members participating in mentor program
- Survey of businesses in mentor program
- Survey of businesses reporting satisfaction with learning/action cohorts
- Outcomes from learning/action cohorts
- # of story placements
- Likes, follows on social media
- Survey reporting clarity of GTA purpose
- Influence on issues of importance to GTA
- # of participants attending events
- New dollars raised
- # of new members
- # members who become sponsors
- Retention rate of members and sponsors
- New members recruited from non-traditional industries
- New grants received
- # committees formed, follow-through of committee work
- Annual survey board members (face to face meetings) about impression of Board meetings, clarity of goals and progress toward goals
- Increase in board attendance