

# Strategic Plan Progress Report

## Appendix

### Fiscal Year 2015



July 2015

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## Introduction

This appendix provides a more detailed listing of a selection of FY 15 CA activities that helped CA move forward towards meeting its strategic plan objectives. It also identifies how well CA has demonstrated progress on achieving its goals this past year by qualitatively ranking progress as significant, moderate or modest. Much progress has been made since the Strategic Plan became effective in May 2015. The impact of our efforts in the coming years will help CA achieve these goals and continue to support our mission of “Working every day in hundreds of ways to make Columbia an even better place to live, work and play.”

### **Goal 1: Deliver programs and services that meet stakeholders’ expectations and enhance the quality of life in Columbia**

*(FY 15 Progress: Moderate)*

*Objective A: Provide a wide array of programs and services that meet the needs of Columbia’s diverse community (Team Lead: Sport and Fitness, Community Services, and Open Space and Facility Services)*

- Opened Haven on the Lake, a Mind Body wellness retreat, introducing a variety of new Mind Body movement classes, a wellness spa, and a healing environment that includes a hot tub, pool, steam therapy, salt therapy, cold plunge and tropical shower.
- Opened Swansfield Pool and Mini-WaterPark early – prior to the formal beginning of the outdoor pool season to better serve adult lap swimmers.
- Created a new sister city with Tema, Ghana and formalized the agreement.
- Progress has been made in all nine priority recommendations of CA’s Comprehensive Plan for Serving Older Adults.
- Revamped CA’s tennis program to better serve all age demographics including the addition of cardio tennis and pickleball.

*Objective B. Continually evaluate and adjust programs and services to meet changing needs of the entire Columbia community (Team Lead: Sport and Fitness, Community Services, and Open Space and Facility Services)*

- Restructured CA’s Professional Fitness Training Team in an effort to focus staffing on member engagement to increase the presence and availability of fitness professionals to members. The restructuring will result in CA’s contributing even more to community health efforts and growing CA’s fee-based programs and services.
- Art Center, Camps, Archives, Teen Center, IEMP, and School Age Services routinely survey users to adjust programs and services or create new programs, such as adding additional time to extended care for working parents.

*Objective C: Promote recreation, health, wellness and social connectivity (Team Lead: Sport and Fitness, Communications and Marketing, Community Services, and Open Space and Facility Services)*

- Held free community workshops at Haven on the Lake related to health and wellness
- The Youth and Teen Center began participation in the Summer Food Program managed by the Maryland Food Bank
- The Supper Club Program is a federally-funded program that provides children with a nutritious meal as part of participation in after-school activities. By serving meals through existing after-school programs, the Supper Club Program ensures that children have consistent access to healthy food in a safe, familiar setting that is free of stigma. Due to the high participation of Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) students at CA's Youth and Teen Center, the facility was accepted as a program site.
- Columbia Art Center's Youth Department promoted recreation and social connectivity through participation in various outreach events including: Howard County Public School System's 5K Fun Run, Howard County Library System's Choose Civility Poster Contest, Long Reach Village Fallfest Celebration, Martin Luther King Service Day art workshops, monthly DVD and Dish get-togethers, Bi-Annual Ceramics Project Runway, Empty Bowls Instructional Bowl-Making workshops and its Annual Cup Exchange.

*Objective D: Create an exceptional customer service experience (Team Lead: Haven on the Lake, Sports and Fitness, Community Services, and Communications and Marketing)*

- Enhanced CA staff customer service capacity and skills by investing in staff training including providing opportunities to attend high quality customer service training programs. A plan on how to implement new customer service training throughout the organization has been developed.
- Implemented training for the Customer and Member Service Team in advanced SNG platform skills to better serve members and residents at headquarters and facilities.

## **Goal 2: Maintain and enhance Columbia's facilities, open spaces, connectivity and environmental stewardship**

*(FY 15 Progress: Significant)*

*Objective A: Enhance the connectivity, walkability and bikeability of Columbia (Team Lead: Planning and Community Affairs and Open Space and Facility Services)*

- Completed the Lake Kittamaquondi pathway loop including the installation of CA's first 10-foot wide pathway, the new standard for CA's highly used pathways.
- Installed two additional pathway signage projects to enhance the ease of use of the pathway system: One project navigates users from Lake Elkhorn to the Stevens Forest Neighborhood Center, while the other directs users from Lake Elkhorn to Route 108, via Jackson Pond.
- Partnered with Howard County and completed the Downtown to Patuxent Branch Trail Extension and the Bike Share feasibility studies. Each study concluded that the projects

were feasible. The county has subsequently been awarded grant funds for design of the first phase of the Patuxent Branch Trail extension.

- Worked with Howard County on implementation of recommendations in CA's Active Transportation Action Agenda related to intersection improvements resulting in several improved CA pathway/county road intersection improvements in Columbia
- Initiated CA's annual count program of pathway users at key pathway locations – the gathered information gives CA a better understanding of pathway users and usage.

*Objective B: Maintain facilities, open spaces, watersheds and environmental stewardship, incorporating innovative technology and conservation practices (Team Lead: Open Space and Facility Services)*

- Received Energy Star Partner of the Year award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for community initiatives related to energy conservation.
- Began implementation of Long Term Lake Management Plan strategies including sediment disposal site analysis and in-lake "hot spot" survey work.
- Developed solar energy field initiative at Nixon's Farm that will provide nearly 25 percent of CA's total electricity needs and also reduce CA's carbon footprint.
- Furthered CA's Weed Warrior program through co-sponsored trainings with the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area to increase the number of trained Weed Warriors. Also partnered with the village watershed committees to increase the number of events that remove invasive plants from CA Open Space and backfill those areas with native species.
- Under CA's grant/cost-sharing project, built 61 additional rain gardens last year for a total of 169 through April 2015 via this grant-funded program.

*Objective C. Continuously evaluate the needs for facility changes based on current and future community needs and best practices; and manage community expectations in regard to changes (Team Leads: Open Space and Facility Services, Community Services, and Sport and Fitness)*

- Upgrades at The Racquet Club at Hobbit's Glen to coincide with the new Golf Clubhouse and Turnhouse projects at Hobbits Glen – these enhancements result in a more connected campus feel to the Hobbit's Glen property.
- Constructed a new Hobbit's Glen Golf Clubhouse and turnhouse with new pro shop, men's and women's locker rooms, underground cart storage, and new spaces for CoHo Grill that include indoor and outdoor dining and seating areas and a golfer's lounge.
- Analyzed all CA facilities for conformance to new American Disability Act guidelines and created a set of implementation recommendations in the Columbia Association Accessibility Report and Plan.
- Constructed a new clubhouse at the Owen Brown tennis facility.

### **Goal 3: Develop and Communicate a shared community vision for Columbia, and advance the vision through advocacy, partnerships and alignment of CA programs and services**

*(FY 15 Progress: Modest)*

*Objective A. Facilitate inclusive processes that develop shared visions and plans for the future of Columbia (Team Lead: Planning and Community Affairs)*

- Hosted four public meetings as part of the Columbia Market Study to engage with the community, explain the process and findings, and respond to questions, comments and suggestions. The report provides valuable factual information and recommendations that can be used to better plan for and revitalize Columbia's village centers.
- Hosted *Columbia Speaks. CA Listens.*, a forum for residents and community stakeholders to provide their thoughts on CA's programs and services, governance structure and communications and community engagement efforts.
- CA established Principles for the 21st Century Planned Community of Columbia to guide the continued evolution and growth of Columbia as a planned community of choice.

*Objective B: Advocate for programs and services that are important to CA residents and customers (Team Lead: All Departments and Offices)*

- Participated in Conversation About the Arts in Howard County and Downtown: a committee and conversation regarding a facility assessment for arts in Howard County.
- Staff served on the BikeHoward advisory committee and Howard County's Bicycle Advisory Group.
- Advocated for enhanced county government focus on, and technical and staff resources for, retail revitalization, retention and attraction.
- Advocated for expanded transportation options in Columbia including enhancements to transit, sidewalks, pathways and improved intersections for those who walk and bicycle.

*Objective C. Strengthen relationships with governmental and nonprofit agencies that deliver programs and services in Columbia (Team Leads: Planning and Community Affairs, Community Services, and Communications and Marketing)*

- Partnered with The Horizon Foundation to bring complete streets expert Mark Fenton to Columbia as part of CA's Community Building Speakers Series.
- Added long-term strategic partnership with USTA Mid Atlantic to host large regional events at CA clubs.
- CA's President/CEO participated on the Advisory Committee and the Director of Community Services participated on the working group to develop Howard County's Office on Aging Older Adult Master Plan.
- Provided start-up grant and technical assistance to The Village in Howard.
- Worked with Korean American Senior Association to develop programs that benefit residents of Columbia.
- Granted a total of \$157,000 as of March in community grants to develop and maintain needed services in the Columbia community.

- Organized the Columbia 50th Birthday, Inc., which secured 501(c)(3) status. Created fundraising and programming strategies and began planning for the celebration events in 2017.
- Partnered with the Howard County Police Department on pathway patrols.
- Partnered with and provided funding for the Columbia Festival of Arts.
- Volunteer Center Serving Howard County has 280 active non-profit and governmental partner organizations and actively works to facilitate volunteer opportunity creation and effective volunteer management strategies, as well as offering free training for partner staff on various volunteer management topics.
- CA has more than 35 partnerships with other community organizations and entities.
- CA's President/CEO served on the County Executive's transition team subcommittee for recreation and parks and also on the County Executive's Spending Affordability Advisory Committee.
- CA President/CEO served on the following boards: Howard County Economic Development Authority; Inner Arbor Trust; Downtown Partnership; and Downtown Arts and Culture Commission.
- Archives developed a program to celebrate the 100th birthday of Jim Rouse.
- Collected food items for the Rt. 1 Day Center and Grassroots; Donation bins were located at four Sport and Fitness facilities and as a result Sport and Fitness collected more than 1/3 of a ton of food for families in need.
- Renewed CA's commitment to Library's Civility campaign.

## **Goal 4: Strengthen communication and community engagement in CA**

*(FY 15 Progress: Significant)*

*Objective A. Effectively communicate the programs and services CA has to offer to the community (Team Lead: Communications and Marketing)*

- Opt-in form posted on website so user/member can select types of information they wish to receive from CA.
- Changed the name at Membership Service Team to Customer and Member Service Team to emphasize assistance for all residents and visitors.
- Added eNewsletter; sent to all emails in database.
- Added once a month Korean translator to Membership Service Center to effectively communicate programs and services offered by CA.
- Communicated and marketed CA's programs and services in the Korea Times and Korea Daily.
- Enhanced all direct mail membership pieces to reflect CA's vision.
- Added Pinterest (social media) to post imagery, content about CA.
- Made interim changes to website to enhance usability and added content.
- Introduced themed issues of the *CA Monthly* to provide more information and depth about CA programs and services.
- Developed weekly video segments with the CA President/CEO on programs and events and posted them on the CA website.
- Partnered with Howard Community College to produce a new CA radio show.

*Objective B. Demonstrate transparency and openness of information and decision-making processes (Team Leads: Planning and Community Affairs, Communications and Marketing, and Administrative Services)*

- Posted questions and answers related to the FY16 budget on CA's website, in addition to the traditionally available budget documents.
- Posted the FY14 organization-wide financial highlights on CA's website for the first time.
- Presented an overview of the operational and financial relationships between CA and the villages to CA's Board of Directors.
- All Columbia Market Study presentations, final report and appendix documents were posted on CA's website.
- "At a Glance" was redesigned to better communicate facts about CA and its programs and operations.

*Objective C. Strengthen partnerships with villages to ensure programs and services are well aligned, effective and efficient (Team Lead: Communications and Marketing, Administrative Services, and General Counsel)*

- Senior CA managers met monthly with village managers and CA's President/CEO attended the meetings on a quarterly basis.
- Posted links, details and contact information for each village on CA's website
- Posted CA and village events on CA's events calendar
- Worked with the villages to develop new policy for making repairs to abandoned houses
- CA's President/CEO accompanied CA's Board chair and attended each village board meeting during the year
- Worked with the village managers and CA's insurance broker to implement a cost-effective solution for rentals insurance coverage

*Objective D. Strengthen processes for gaining community input, evaluating community needs, and involving advisory committees and other stakeholders (Team Lead: Community Services, Sport and Fitness, and Planning and Community Affairs,)*

- Developed charges for each of the advisory committees.
- International Exchange and Multicultural Advisory Committee worked to formalize relationship with Tema, Ghana.
- Worked closely with the Sport and Fitness Advisory Committees to brainstorm and develop capital funding priorities and to continually adjust and improve operational processes at the Sport and Fitness facilities.

*Objective E. Strengthen relationships with businesses and other employers to engage their employees in CA programs and services (Team Lead: Communications and Marketing and Sport and Fitness)*

- Included a column from CA's President in each issue of the *Business Monthly*.
- Established a CA corporate membership position.
- Formalized CA's business sponsorship packages.
- Refreshed CA's Howard County Government employees membership discount.

## **Goal 5: Demonstrate the practices of a high-performing and responsive organization** *(FY 15 Progress: Moderate)*

*Objective A. Improve CA governance structure and performance to guide the organization's future (Team Lead: President's Office, Office of the General Counsel)*

- Implemented a comprehensive and streamlined organizational structure for Columbia Association, which identifies to residents and other stakeholders CA's core functional areas and assigns the appropriate senior staff to lead each.
- Made administrative changes to the organization's Charter and Bylaws to update documents and ensure they conform to current law and practices.

*Objective B: Maintain strong fiscal discipline, control costs and ensure a high value for CA customers and annual charge payers (Team Lead: Administrative Services)*

- Negotiated a lease for the location of CA's new headquarters facility with an option to purchase at the same total rent expense as CA is currently paying, but with more space.
- Conducted a competitive process for long-term debt that resulted in the most favorable terms for long-term debt, including a historically-low interest rate.
- Obtained exceptionally favorable pricing on electricity for CA through the use of a reverse auction, which also resulted in CA procuring 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources.
- Conducted audits focused on cost-savings opportunities, internal controls and accountability.
- Moody's Investors Service issued CA a bond rating of Aa1 in 2015, judged to be of high quality and very low credit risk – CA's best-ever rating.

*Objective C. Provide continuous professional development for staff to ensure high standards of performance (Team Lead: Administrative Services)*

- Instituted Learning Management System online training for all team members, including courses on ethics and ADA to have better trained team member base.
- Made opportunities available for School Aged Services staff to attend training for above-and-beyond licensing requirements.
- Created part-time position to monitor and assist team members in attaining Level Two credentialing through the Maryland State Department of Education, a process which requires an additional 20 hours of approved child care training.
- Provided educational/outreach materials to team members on several internal control related topics, including protecting personally identifiable information, how to reduce the probability of identity theft and what it means to delegate responsibilities to another team member.

*Objective D. Promote innovation in technology and processes to advance efficiency, support communications and deliver value to customers (Team Lead: Communications and Marketing and Administrative Services)*

- Implemented the ability to purchase CA memberships online.

- Widgets incorporated into the Online Activities Guide to indicate a class schedule has changed (and shows new information), providing a more user-friendly experience.
- Upgraded our network access speeds, through cooperation with Howard County and the Inter-County Broadband Network (ICBN).
- Installed enterprise-grade, secured WiFi network at five ICBN locations including the three fitness facilities, Haven on the Lake and CA's Maintenance Facility.
- Upgraded to version 6.0 of SNG, which introduces many new features including mobility solutions and end-user apps.
- Implemented a paperless pay system for CA team members.
- Have implemented widespread use of Pardot email broadcast system to better deliver and track electronic communications, and to aggregate like information, as well as eliminating fliers and single-topic communications.