

Strategic Plan Progress Report Appendix

Fiscal Year 2016



July 2016

Introduction

This appendix provides a more detailed listing of a selection of FY 16 CA activities that helped Columbia Association (CA) move forward toward 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 16 Progress: Significant)

Objective A: Provide a wide array of programs and services that meet the needs of Columbia’s diverse community.

- Initiated Korean and Chinese translation services in the Customer and Member Service Center. The translators also have accompanied new members during their initial free consultation at the fitness clubs.
- Board approved the establishment of new sister city in Cap-Haitien, Haiti.
- Collaborated with the Korean American Senior Association on senior programs.
- Provided the Rain Garden Cost Share Program for Columbia residents living in the Little Patuxent watershed. To date, the program has installed 230 rain gardens.
- Partnered with the Horizon Foundation on the Open Streets event that demonstrated how streets could be reimaged to create safe accommodations for all users including walkers and cyclists. More than 1,000 people attended.
- Hosted the Community Building Speakers Series and brought nationally-recognized land use attorney Don Elliott to address the community on the best zoning practices for large planned communities.
- Retrofitted Fairway Hills Golf Club to allow the game FootGolf to be accommodated; this sport combines soccer and golf.

Objective B: Continuously evaluate and adjust programs and services to meet the changing needs of the entire Columbia community.

- Led focus groups and implemented user surveys to modify camp offerings.
- Surveyed users of the Art Center, Youth and Teen Center, Columbia Archives, the Volunteer Center Serving Howard County, and School Age Services and used results to adjust and modify programs and services.
- A cross-departmental work team prepared recommendations for CA Board consideration on a new and simplified membership structure based on consultant ClubIntel’s previous work, detailed financial analyses and a statistically valid community survey of 1,500 community members.

- Made the following facilities ADA accessible: Faulkner Ridge and Dorsey Hall wading pools, and parking lots at Hawthorn Center, Amherst House, Hobbits Glen Golf Club, Swansfield Neighborhood Center, Columbia Ice Rink, Owen Brown Community Center, Linden Hall, Oakland Manor and the Meeting Room in Dorsey Hall. CA has also improved accessibility of our pathway system. The cross and running slopes were adjusted along the pathway from Little Patuxent Parkway and Vantage Point Road to the Lakefront plaza, the pathway along White Acre Road and along Lake Elkhorn from the dam to the main dock.
- Comment cards were made available in all sport and fitness facilities to solicit feedback and understand user needs and concerns.

Objective C: Promote recreation, health, wellness and social connectivity.

- Initiated guided walks in the open space system called “Exploring Columbia on Foot.” The walks focus on environmental education and implement a recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan for Serving Older Adults.
- Integrated the First Tee golf program into more schools.
- Provided member participation fitness programs such as Rock Your Jeans and Biggest Winner.
- Columbia Ice Rink hosted a performance of the Nutcracker on Ice.
- Tennis introduced Pickleball, which is highly popular among the senior population.
- Participated and/or partnered in the Howard County Public School System Health Expo, the Howard Community College 5k Challenge, the Nutrition Expo and the Family Wellness Day.

Objective D: Create an exceptional customer service experience.

- Implementation of the newly developed “Service Excellence” customer service program throughout the organization.
- Provided all Customer and Member Service Center and fitness club supervisors with formal, ongoing SNG (membership software) and sales training throughout the year and reinforced that training online via CA’s Learning Management System.
- Created an SNG Academy for CA employees that use the membership software.
- Sport and fitness facilities were improved to enhance the member experience and access to the clubs. We have actively coached and trained team members on delivering an exceptional service experience, have updated many policies that created barriers to service and are working to identify and correct others on an ongoing basis.

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

(FY 16 Progress: Significant)

Objective A: Enhance the connectivity, walkability and bikeability of Columbia

- Partnered with Howard County Government on the Bike Share Feasibility Study, which recommended a pilot bike-share program focused on Downtown Columbia and nearby environs to increase mobility and alternative modes of transportation.
- Allocated funding to support the pilot bike-share system that Howard County Government will be installing in Downtown Columbia.
- Partnered with Howard County Government to include a demonstration of a protected bike lane as part of the 2015 Columbia BikeAbout.
- Coordinated and cooperated with Howard Hughes Corporation in the alignment and easement process for the new Downtown Columbia multi-use pathway from Howard County General Hospital to Blandair Park.
- Installed additional pathway wayfinding signage in many high-use areas of the pathway system to enhance the navigation and enjoyment of our pathway system.
- Engaged the University of Maryland Extension Service and the Volunteer Center Serving Howard County in continued training for CA's Weed Warrior program. One outcome of this effort will be to impact the aesthetic and environmental value of the forest edges along the pathway system.
- Completed the restoration of the Tidesfall mulch path along Wilde Lake to address erosion issues.

Objective B: Maintain facilities, open spaces, watersheds and environmental stewardship, incorporating innovative technology and conservation practices.

- Secured wind and solar renewable energy certificates to offset 100 percent of CA's power use with renewable sources. As a result, CA's carbon footprint has been reduced by more than half. This was accomplished as part of CA's two megawatt solar farm initiative in West Friendship, Maryland.
- Installed and began operation of a combined heat and power (CHP) generating station at Supreme Sports Club. The CHP generator simultaneously provides electricity and hot water for the club, which results in highly efficient use of energy and reduced operating costs. This is the first such installation of its kind in Howard County.
- Installed more than 1,000 LED light fixtures in and around CA facilities to reduce energy consumption and operating costs.
- Utilized sustainable design practices in planning for the new Long Reach tennis facility and the Columbia Swim Center renovations; this included the specification of ENERGY STAR equipment and high efficiency LED light fixtures.
- CA initiated a Pond Assessment Study, which will evaluate 19 ponds that CA owns and maintains to determine future necessary investments and costs.

- CA continued with the near- and mid-term objectives of the Lake Sediment Management Plan, which included determining a sediment material placement site from CA's three lakes.
- CA initiated a bridge and underpass baseline study to understand the structural integrity of these assets and to prioritize future investments to ensure they are maintained and meet standards.
- Built 17 retrofit projects associated with the Watershed Management Plan.
- CA was recognized by the Audubon Society for exceptional treatment of the environment at Hobbit's Glen Golf Club.

Objective C: Continually evaluate the needs for facilities to change based on current and future community needs and best practices, and manage community expectations in regard to changes.

- Resurfaced the courts at Wilde Lake Tennis Club and replaced bridges at Fairway Hills Golf Club and the mini-golf course at Columbia SportsPark.
- During shutdowns, completed maintenance and upgrade projects at the fitness clubs and the ice rink, including painting, carpeting, room upgrades and new equipment.
- Aquatics completed major and minor upgrades at most of the outdoor pools and finished planning the Swim Center renovation.

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 16 Progress: Moderate)

Objective A: Facilitate inclusive processes that develop shared visions and plans for the future of Columbia.

- Columbia's 50th Birthday held informational sessions with other organizations to discuss opportunities for how they can support, participate and get involved with the celebration.
- Prepared the Columbia Development Tracker to collect and track development proposals and related meetings in the Columbia area. The tracker was updated monthly and shared with and distributed to the community. This consolidated report allows community members to be aware of land use proposals and meetings that impact Columbia and is presented in an easy to digest manner.

Objective B: Advocate for programs and services that are important to CA residents and customers.

- Testified at the Howard County Planning Board about CA's concerns with a proposed new land use and access at the intersection of Snowden River Parkway and Minstrel Way.
- Advocated for retaining the county's stormwater management fee.
- Participated in the Howard County Office on Aging's Master Plan for Older Adults.

- Participated in the Howard County Energy Task Force to advise the county executive on energy-related policies and programs.
- Advocated for the greenway alignment of the Downtown to Patuxent Branch Trail Extension before the Planning Board and the Howard County Council.

Objective C: Strengthen relationships with governmental and nonprofit agencies that deliver programs and services in Columbia.

- Partnered with the Howard County Government to bring national expert Don Elliott to Columbia as part of the Columbia Community Building Speakers Series in preparation for Howard County's review of New Town zoning.
- Partnered with Horizon Foundation on their biannual Health Survey.
- Partnered with the Howard County Library System on the 2016 Choose Civility campaign.
- Hosted the 2015 Congressional Youth Art Competition at Columbia Art Center.
- Partnered with Howard County Government and the University of Maryland through its Partnership in Action Learning Sustainability program, which paired the county government and CA with professors and courses to address identified community needs. Projects included a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, urban ecology, landscape architecture, social work, real estate and public policy.
- Partnered with the Howard County Arts Council and Howard County Government on the outdoor community event ARTreach.
- Partnered with Grassroot on Empty Bowls and Howard County Tourism on the Blossoms of Hope exhibition.
- Partnered with the Howard County National Honor Society to design and implement a weekly technology club with the Youth and Teen Center.
- Entered into an official partnership with the Howard County Police Department for a chess club run by police officers on a weekly basis at the Youth and Teen Center
- Volunteer Center Serving Howard County registered more than 50 new agencies (more than double the number of new agencies in 2015) and more than 2,500 individuals that expressed an interest in volunteering.
- Received a Volunteer Generations Fund grant from the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism.
- Hosted the Boy's Night Out for Longfellow Elementary School and worked with Howard County Recreation and Parks on golf camps.

Objective D: Communicate the vision widely and use the vision to promote Columbia as a community of choice.

- Through the 50th Birthday Celebration and Columbia Archives, CA held two events for community-based organizations to participate in the 50th Birthday Celebration of Columbia in 2017.
- CA's new website includes a section called Explore Columbia, which highlights the assets of the community and includes the tab, "Why Choose Columbia." This is a descriptive list of all the awards and recognition Columbia/Howard County and CA have received.

Goal 4: Strengthen communication and community engagement in CA. (FY 16 Progress: Significant)

Objective A: Effectively communicate the programs and services CA has to offer to the community.

- Expanded communication and marketing avenues to include a monthly Sport and Fitness eNewsletter, an eight-page section in Howard Magazine that is a vehicle for giving more in-depth information on programs and services, and translated advertisements in Korean and Chinese publications that also mention CA's new translation services.
- Team members participated in many outreach events such as Greenfest, aging forums, and back to school nights.
- Led four community meetings to promote energy efficiency and solar programs.
- Held an open house where the community was invited to visit our facilities and participate in programming.

Objective B: Demonstrate transparency and openness of information and decision-making processes.

- The new website has been designed to make it easy to find information searching by subject matter or by the user's constituent group (i.e., member, resident, etc.). It also includes a Realtor section with information used at the FY16 Realtor presentations to inform realtors working in Columbia of CA services, programs and facilities.
- Posted all budget input and questions from community stakeholders on the CA website.
- With new technology, CA has created podcasts of board meetings that have improved sound quality and posting time to CA's website.

Objective C: Strengthen partnerships with villages to ensure programs and services are well aligned, effective and efficient.

- Held Ghana Fest at Slayton House and was assisted by volunteers from the Wilde Lake Community Association.
- Led a work team with village managers to review and revise the CA/Village Management Contract to produce an updated and more user-friendly document.
- Continued to support village-based watershed committees to help promote and implement CA's and the county government's residential stormwater management programs. To date, there are committees that oversee watershed related programs in River Hill, Kings Contrivance and Long Reach, Wilde Lake and Oakland Mills.

Objective D: Strengthen processes for gaining community input, evaluating community needs, and involving advisory committees and other stakeholders.

- Met regularly, coordinated with and received feedback from CA's advisory committees on activities, facilities and programs.
- Member and customer opinions and comments regarding CA's website were collected via a survey and were used as the new CA website was developed.

- Art Center Advisory Committee assisted with programming and volunteers at exhibit openings
- Senior Advisory Committee reviewed implementation progress of the Comprehensive Plan for Serving Older Adults on a monthly basis.
- Teen Advisory Committee assisted with programs events and classes at the Youth and Teen Center.
- Conducted two information sessions for people considering candidacy for CA's Board of Directors.
- IT Advisory Committee conducted stakeholder interviews to assist with the development of the IT strategic plan.
- Tennis Advisory Committee was actively involved in planning for the new indoor tennis facility.
- Golf Advisory Committee was valuable in providing feedback on potential improvements to the new clubhouse at Hobbit's Glen Golf Club.
- Health and Fitness, Green, Aquatics and Sport and Fitness advisory committees all provided important input and guidance throughout the year on many topics key to delivering value.

Objective E: Strengthen relationships with businesses and other employers to engage their employees in CA programs and services.

- Created the corporate sales position, which has resulted in increased revenue and new memberships from Columbia-area businesses.
- Created Haven on the Lake marketing collateral for outreach to the business community.
- Made presentation to Howard County Realtors regarding CA governance structure, facilities and programs.
- Participated in a panel presentation to the Maryland State Bar Association regarding Downtown Columbia development and Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods.

Goal 5: Demonstrate the practices of a high-performing and responsive organization.

(FY 16 Progress: Significant)

Objective A: Improve CA's governance structure and performance to guide the organization's future.

- Changed Board of Directors operations by eliminating several board committees and changing the board meeting schedule to one work session and one board meeting per month, and revised board governing documents accordingly.
- Delivered an overview of Columbia governance at Excite Columbia.
- Created new part-time covenants administrator position to effectively manage covenant enforcement process and work more closely with villages.

Objective B: Maintain strong fiscal discipline, control costs and ensure a high value for CA customers and annual charge payers.

- CA obtained an Aa1 issuer credit rating from Moody's Investors Service, one of the three internationally recognized credit rating agencies. This was an upgrade from the previous rating of the senior secured bonds. Higher credit ratings translate into lower interest expense on debt issued by CA.
- The FY 17/18 budget process used a rebuilding budget process, oriented to a zero-base model, rather than just a continuation of previous years. The budget is a strong management control and helps to ensure that CA uses its resources wisely.
- Haven on the Lake's membership structure was changed to be more in alignment with market trends and offerings.

Objective C: Provide continuous professional development for staff to ensure high standards of performance.

- CA team members attended various conferences to continue professional development and ensure high performance when delivering services to members, including the International Health Racquet and Sportsclub Association, Spectrum NG, Pardot, CEO Summit, CSI Summit, REX Roundtable and the International Aquatics Safety School and American Planning Association.
- CA team members attended several in-house trainings to ensure high standards of performance including a Spectrum NG academy, tennis coaching, personal training and Service Excellence.
- Hired a new Learning and Organizational Development manager and a specialist who are working to re-deploy the Learning Management System, add courses to its library and develop training programs specific to the needs of CA team members, as determined through one-on-one interviews with managers.
- Made a series of GoogleApps for Business webinars available to all team members.
- Landscape management staff attended numerous continuing education programs, certification courses and specialized training, including tree risk evaluation classes.

Objective D: Promote innovation in technology and processes to advance efficiency, support communications and deliver value to customers.

- Launched a blog on Haven on the Lake's website to engage members and others.
- The new CA website features more complete SNG integration for a better user experience when registering for classes.
- Installed digital signage at CA Headquarters and Supreme Sport Club to provide an in-facility communication platform to inform members and guests.
- Worked with Howard County Office of Technology and Communication Services to implement the Inter-County Broadband Network at six CA facilities to provide more reliable and faster, high-speed internet access.
- Started migration of CA's enterprise resource planning solution to cloud-based platform.
- Introduced PTA Global, an online educational, training and development tool for personal trainers.