

Strategic Plan Progress Report Appendix

Fiscal Year 2017



August 2017

Introduction

This appendix provides a more detailed listing of a selection of FY17 Columbia Association (CA) activities that helped CA move forward toward meeting its Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Much progress has been made since the Strategic Plan became effective in May 2014. The impact of our efforts to date and in coming years will help CA achieve our strategic goals and objectives goals as we 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.

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

- Hosted the Speakers Series event "Sustaining Racial Integration in Housing in Columbia: Exploring the Model of Oak Park, Illinois," featuring Rob Breymaier, executive director of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center.
- Retrofitted Fairway Hills Golf Club to be able to host the game of FootGolf, which has its own tees and holes along the rough areas of the course.
- Expanded group fitness schedule to include both more high-intensity training and beginners classes.
- Updated Supreme Sports Club's locker rooms to provide a more comfortable and welcoming environment.
- Grounded all indoor pools with the exception of the SplashDown pool at Columbia Swim Center to allow members to safely continue to swim during thunderstorms.
- Launched a new Optimal Health Baby & Me medical referral program to better serve the new mom community in Columbia.
- Added a director of player development for golf to engage existing members and draw potential new members for golf-related activities such as lessons and tournaments.
- Produced Columbia's first annual Veterans Day event at the Downtown Columbia Lakefront in November.
- Held a new residents event in November in collaboration with the Howard County Library System.
- Held KidsDay in June; Excite Columbia in fall; and several events to inform local real estate agents and staff about CA and Columbia.
- Offered energy efficiency and solar cooperative programs to the community to help reduce energy costs and advise residents on how to support clean energy in Columbia.

Objective B: Continue evaluating and adjusting programs and services to meet the changing needs of the entire Columbia community.

- Revised the group fitness schedules to provide improved class types and times that better meet the needs of CA members.
- Conducted surveys and focus groups to explore the future of the indoor cycling program.
- Hired an Older Adult Program Manager to coordinate programs and services with other agencies to bring programs geared toward the older adult community to CA.
- Collaborated with the Korean American Senior Association to implement multicultural conversations on aging.
- Signed an official Sister Cities agreement with Cap-Haitien, Haiti.
- Hosted students from Tema, Ghana, for the first time as part of the Sister Cities/Multicultural Exchange Program.
- Held a Mexico and Central American Culture Fest with the Howard County Library System.
- Implemented a book collection drive and provided needed books for the Tema, Ghana, public library and nursing school.

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

- CA's Youth and Teen Center was one of a select few community organizations to receive the Governor's Crime Prevention Award for their contributions to furthering crime prevention. Held fitness programs to schools in Columbia.
- Collaborated with Howard Community College on the HCC 5K Challenge to raise money for scholarships while promoting health and wellness.
- Collaborated with Howard County General Hospital on the Dazzle Dash 5K to raise awareness of the services provided by the hospital and CA.
- Partnered with FIRN on an International 5K Race and festival to raise awareness of the services provided for our community's foreign-born population.
- Expanded the "Exploring Columbia on Foot" program to include additional walks, as well as some walks on weekends. The theme of the walks continued to focus primarily on environmental topics but also included historical sites and discussion to highlight Columbia's 50th Birthday.

Objective D: Create an exceptional customer service experience.

- Piloted a new user-friendly method to communicate with potential and existing members to discuss membership-related questions through an online chat feature. This improved customer service and helped CA better communicate with younger members and customers who prefer chat-related communication.
- Launched Clarabridge as CA's member experience management system to improve how CA collects, responds to and analyzes customer feedback. It also provides CA the ability to identify trends as they are happening and to understand where we are doing well and where we need to make improvements; and, if improvements are being made, whether they are having the desired impact.

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

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

- Provided funding to help the Howard County Government launch the bike share program in and around Downtown Columbia.
- Coordinated the application for a Bicycle Friendly Community designation by the American League of Bicyclists. As a result, Columbia was awarded a bronze designation that recognizes the work CA and other organizations have done to create a bicycle friendly environment.
- Installed three new footbridges and widened 5,500 linear feet of pathway around Lake Elkhorn.
- Updated the CA Pathway app to include new landmarks and pathway updates and create a better user experience.
- Installed additional way-finding signage along pathway sections in River Hill, Kings Contrivance and Owen Brown.
- Installed pathway etiquette signage at some of the busiest open space areas to promote the safe and enjoyable use of the pathway system for all users.
- Upgraded 75 benches in open space areas.
- Led the effort to plant 50,000 daffodil bulbs throughout the community as a beautiful, colorful display in honor of Columbia’s 50th Birthday celebration.

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

- Completed the Harper’s Glen stream restoration project (970 linear feet), built the bioretention facility at the end of Long Look Lane and stabilized the weir above the forebay at Jackson Pond.
- Reduced energy use intensity (EUI) by 6 percent relative to FY16.
- Completed 25 LED lighting retrofit projects throughout CA’s building portfolio, reducing energy consumption and operating costs.
- Introduced new technology and enhanced conservation practices in FY17 to reduce environmental pressure from wildlife, specifically geese, at highly used parks, plazas and other venues in CA open space that included strategically-placed predator (owl) decoys, predator sound (call) devices, and egg addling.
- Began testing various non-glyphosate based herbicides at CA’s tot lots.
- Installed more than a dozen high efficiency ENERGY STAR HVAC units throughout CA’s facilities.
- Continued to administer the Rain Garden Cost Share program for Columbia residents interested in treating stormwater on their own properties. As a result, 56 rain gardens were built in FY17.

- Completed an Open Space Assessment report, which analyzed all plans, policies and procedures related to CA's open space and identified opportunities to enhance management of CA's open space lands.
- Through the end of FY17, reduced CA's carbon footprint by more than 50 percent relative to 2012.

Objective C: Continue to 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.

- Began construction of the Long Reach Tennis Club, a new indoor tennis facility.
- Upgraded a significant portion of CA's equipment in the fitness clubs.
- Began significant infrastructure replacement at Columbia Ice Rink.
- Modernized the irrigation system at Hobbit's Glen Golf Club to be more effective and efficient.
- Launched a new color palate in the gyms to create a more contemporary appearance.
- Modified operating hours of Columbia DogPark after evaluating regular feedback and comments from members to be more responsive to the community.

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.

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

- Worked with the Rouse Scholars program at Howard Community College to integrate Columbia's vision in future programs.
- Planned and implemented Columbia's 50th Birthday, which celebrated the original vision and future development of Columbia.
- In cooperation with other community organizations, coordinated ColumbiaDialogues. These were small group discussions on race, class and culture that provided residents an opportunity to better understand their own perspectives and those of others who are different from themselves.
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Objective B: Advocate for programs and services that are important to CA residents and customers.

- As part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Serving Older Adults, advocated to Howard County Government for transit travel training.
- Promoted BGE's Smart Energy Savers program as a useful tool for residents to make their homes more energy-efficient.

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

- Collaborated with Howard County Government to hire consultants to analyze the feasibility of different land uses in Oakland Mills Village Center.
- Participated and promoted the Howard County Library System's Choose Civility campaign, which in FY17 focused on social media communications.
- Sponsored and/or promoted other organizations' programs and events in Columbia such as the grand opening and community programming for The Chrysalis, Columbia's 50th Birthday (multiple events), Downtown Columbia 5K, Chamber of Commerce (multiple events), Leadership Howard County initiatives, and events held at community centers and schools.
- Collaborated with Horizon Foundation on Speak(easy) Howard, which taught participants how to discuss end-of-life wishes with family members.
- Collaborated with Inner Arbor Trust in implementing their first community concert, which was performed by the Columbia Orchestra.
- Provided planning assistance and support for the Howard County Police Department's bike patrol and community events held on CA's open space.

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

- Integrated CA vision and mission in online employment advertising and social employment advertising.
- Collaborated with the Howard County Economic Development Authority and Howard County Tourism on artwork, a press kit and talking/media points related to the designation of Columbia being #1 Small City in America (Money Magazine).
- Collaborated with the Columbia's 50th Birthday organization to promote the ideals upon which Columbia was founded, reflect on the history of Columbia, and look toward the future, through a series of events for the public.
- Worked with numerous media outlets, including but not limited to The Baltimore Sun, The Washington Post, Baltimore Magazine, Howard Magazine, Common Ground Magazine and international outlets to promote Columbia in its 50th Birthday year and to respond to inquiries about the original vision and how it is manifested today.
- Installed mission and vision statements at most CA facilities in entrances and/or conference rooms.
- Increased staff presence at the high-use parks to enhance users' experience through answering questions and providing guidance and enforcement of CA's rules for the use of open space.
- Developed an outreach program in response to resident concerns about the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

Goal 4: Strengthen communication and community engagement in CA.

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

- Hosted three open houses open to the public to introduce them to CA's facilities and membership offerings.
- Built a new Haven on the Lake website to provide more information and integration with registration and scheduling software. This led to more timely information and created an improved customer service experience for Haven on the Lake members.
- Added digital signage to CA facilities to improve communication with members and visitors about programs, services and events available to them.
- Provided technical knowledge and assistance to the 50th Birthday organization related to launching their website.
- Enhanced communications with the patrons of Columbia DogPark in order to provide more timely notice of changes to DogPark hours due to severe weather, special events or other impacts on the regular schedule.

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

- Purchased and installed technology, trained staff and tested live-streaming of CA Board meetings so that, in FY18, CA could begin to live-stream CA Board meetings to be more accessible and transparent to the Columbia community and allow those who cannot attend to watch the meetings or view them at a later date.
- Held four different Yay CA! events at different facilities for CA team members to be aware of the advertising campaign and its meaning. The events were also used to discuss and answer any questions related to the (then) upcoming membership restructure.

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

- Created a new Covenants Administrator staff position to increase support of the villages related to residential covenant enforcement and, as a result, increased efforts to close 72 covenant enforcement cases.
- Gave a presentation to each village association board of directors prior to CA's new membership structure launch so they could better respond to resident inquiries related to the new structure.
- Collaborated with the village community associations to ensure events between the two organizations did not conflict with one another.
- Launched the "Common Concerns for Common Property" program to assist and educate local homeowners associations and village community associations on how to address issues related to common property.

- Regularly engaged village boards and village community association managers regarding cooperative energy programs for residents.

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

- Administered surveys following events and educational opportunities to get feedback and determine how to improve programming.
- Reviewed surveys gathered in School Age Services, Columbia Art Center, International Exchange, Camps, Columbia Archives, Columbia Community Exchange to modify existing or start new programs.
- Launched a new Science, Technology, Art and Math Camp based on user feedback.

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

- Started working with local businesses to provide benefits and value to CA members, featured in CA Digest.
- Solicited sponsorships from businesses for the 50th Birthday and engaged their employees in events and programs surrounding the celebration.

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

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

- Created a new set of performance metrics for a quarterly dashboard, to assist CA's Board of Directors in evaluating the organization's performance. Completed a comprehensive human resources policy, procedures and practices review and made changes as necessary for either compliance or to implement best practices to enable a stronger organization focused on its mission.
- Office of Internal Audit was independently evaluated and determined to be in compliance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' professional standards (with respect to all of the audits, investigations and special projects performed for CA). Performed audits and special projects resulting in improvements to CA's internal control environment.
- In May 2016, CA's Board of Directors approved the new membership structure. In FY17, CA staff convened a cross-departmental work team that spent the year working to ensure a smooth transition to the new membership structure and to implement and communicate the new structure to existing and potential members. The new membership structure was launched May 1, 2017.

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

- Completed FY17 with an increase in net assets of \$5,102,000, exceeding the budgeted amount by \$1,288,000, as a result of very strong expense controls.
- Gained agreement from Howard County Government to have the county share in costs for repairs to one of CA's ponds and to accept future structural maintenance responsibility for four CA ponds.

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

- Sport and Fitness team members attend multiple conferences this year including: Mid-Atlantic Club Management Association; International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association; Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Summit; Roundtables for Executives; and the International Aquatics Safety School; in addition to CA trainings on SNG, tennis coaching, physical therapy delivery, and Service Excellence.
- Provided orientation training to more than 200 new team members to ensure alignment with mission and values; redesigned compliance and team orientation training; developed and rolled out Data Privacy and Security Refresher training, Reporting Child Abuse and Preventing Bullying training, and Active Shooter and Workplace Violence training; introduced more than 300 new online and instructor led courses; introduced CA Learns job aids, whitepapers and resource materials; and trained more than 1,000 CA team members on our Service Excellence quality initiative. All human resources and payroll staff attended professional development courses.
- Communications and Marketing team members attended conferences and/or webinars on digital media, Adobe Creative Suite, website programming, member engagement, live streaming technology, social media platforms and city/county communications and marketing tactics.
- Office of Internal Audit attended conferences and training on a variety of pertinent internal control, audit, and governance topics, which also enabled them to maintain active CPA licenses.
- Office of Internal Audit provided internal professional development through: (1) Creating/distributing a whitepaper titled: "Common Social Engineering Attacks and Prevention Tips", and (2) Presenting guidance on protecting personally identifiable information ("PII") to the Sport and Fitness managers at their monthly meeting.
- Leadership Howard County selected two team members for their Premier program and two for the Leadership Essentials program.
- The Landscape Services team enhanced their ability to maintain the open space and serve the community through additional training and certification on topics such as tree risk assessment and hardscape installation.
- Open Space Management staff attended training courses on pesticide applications to maintain various certifications.

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

- Upgraded CA's enterprise management system (finance, procurement, human resources etc.) to version 10 and migrated it to the cloud, providing greater system reliability.
- Began implementation of a cloud-based budgeting and financial reporting application to improve the accuracy and functionality of budgeting at CA.