

# **Strategic Plan Progress Report**

**Fiscal Year 2018**



**August, 2018**

## Introduction

This report provides a review of actions taken to achieve Columbia Association's (CA) Strategic Plan, goals and objectives. This is the third annual Strategic Plan Progress Report. This one highlights CA's accomplishments from May 2017 through April 2018, Fiscal Year 2018 ("FY18").

The current Strategic Plan was developed in 2013 and 2014 and became effective May 1, 2014, after approval by CA's Board of Directors. The strategic planning process included a review of trends and driving forces, as well as self-examination. CA also engaged in a number of interviews and meetings with community stakeholders and other organizations that work closely with or interact with CA. These information gathering sessions helped CA develop a framework of goals and objectives, with a focus on its desired future.

**CA's Mission:** *"Working every day in hundreds of ways to make Columbia an even better place to live, work and play."*

**CA's Vision:** *"Making Columbia the community of choice – today and for generations to come."*

## Moving the Needle — Recent Progress/Activities

CA's Strategic Plan identifies five, high-level goals and related objectives to guide the organization, stated below:

1. Deliver programs and services that meet stakeholders' expectations and enhance the quality of life in Columbia.
2. Maintain and enhance Columbia's facilities, open spaces, connectivity and environmental stewardship.
3. Develop and communicate a shared community vision for Columbia and advance the vision through advocacy, partnerships and alignment of CA programs and services.
4. Strengthen communication and community engagement in CA.
5. Demonstrate the practices of a high-performing and responsive organization.

This report covers progress and activities in FY18. It is organized by the five strategic plan goals. Additional detail is provided in the appendix by goal and related objective.

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

### **Overview**

CA offers a wide array of programs, events, activities and services. Some of the most notable programs and services include before and after school care; summer camps; a Lakefront Summer Festival featuring free concerts and movies; an archive collection that includes materials from the planning and development of Columbia to the present; a volunteer center; a sister cities program; and hundreds of indoor and outdoor fitness classes and programs at our sport and fitness facilities. Highlights of recent programs that demonstrate how we are adapting to the changing needs of Columbia to better serve our community are provided below.

### **FY18 Highlights**

**Customer Service and Feedback:** In FY18, CA began to put in place changes at our fitness clubs based on customer feedback gained through the Clarabridge survey data system, CA’s member experience management system. Using the data collected and customer feedback, we implemented changes, large and small, at our fitness facilities to enhance the overall member experience. For instance, in response to requests for lower pricing for resident card holders, CA reduced pricing for resident card holders at all pools, Mondays through Thursdays, to encourage use. In response to requests for expanded adults-only swim time, we added adult lap swim hours Monday through Friday, at Bryant Woods pool to offer adults a place to swim without the need to dodge children enjoying themselves. We also responded quickly to maintenance issues identified by facility users. In addition to Clarabridge, CA has focused on training all team members on customer service throughout the organization. As a result, over 900 team members participated in Service Excellence customer care classes throughout the year. We also modified camp offerings, based on feedback from parents and youth participants and, as a result, saw camp enrollment increase.

**Physical Fitness and School Age Services:** The personal training program partnered with School Age Services to provide fitness programming in the various before and aftercare programs at Columbia schools.

**Innovative and Expanded Tennis Programming:** We introduced a number of programs to expand our tennis offerings, including Tennis Whizz for three-and four-year olds with a guardian; Play Tennis Fast for new adult players; indoor Pickleball league play; and daytime

tennis leagues for players who work in the evening or at night. All this helped increase the number of people engaged in our tennis programs.

**Multicultural Engagement.** As part of its many activities and engagement opportunities with community members of different nationalities, our International Exchange and Multicultural Programs division hosted an Intracultural Conversation on Aging with the Korean Senior Association and Columbia Community Exchange participants.

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

### **Overview**

Columbia Association owns and maintains 3,600 acres of open space as a permanent community asset. This open space, which weaves through residential and commercial areas, is a defining feature of Columbia. Amenities include lakes, ponds, parks, tot lots, basketball and tennis courts, fishing piers, landscaped features, and 95 miles of paved pathways. CA also operates and maintains three fitness clubs, a roller skating rink, an ice rink, a horse center, two golf clubs, five tennis clubs, 23 outdoor swimming pools, five indoor pools and a hot water therapy pool at Haven on the Lake mind body wellness retreat, Columbia DogPark, and Columbia SportsPark. Through funding allocated in capital and operating budgets, CA maintains and reinvests in these facilities.

Columbia Association is committed to environmental sustainability. Major sustainability initiatives include watershed management and energy management. CA is actively working to restore Columbia’s watersheds through public education and projects to reduce water runoff and restore our streams. In addition, CA is working to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

### **FY18 Highlights**

**Energy and Environmental Management:** CA has made great strides toward reducing its environmental impact. By the end of FY 18, CA had reduced its energy use intensity by 20 percent relative to FY12. This past year, CA completed three new solar, photovoltaic installations on CA property and completed a three-year electronic procurement that included 100 percent offset with wind credits. CA also installed more than a dozen ENERGY HVAC units throughout CA’s building portfolio. In addition to its own energy use, CA implemented the Energy Smart Community program with quarterly energy meetings and support for residents to install solar photovoltaic systems or undertake energy efficiency upgrades.

**Stormwater Improvements:** CA in coordination with Ecotone was awarded a State Highway Administration (SHA) grant for a stream restoration project that will restore one-and-a quarter miles of stream that runs from Cedar Lane Park, through Wilde Lake, to Lake Kittamaqundi. SHA is funding all aspects of this \$2.2 million project at no cost to CA in exchange for stream restoration credits that will apply towards the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit that SHA is obligated to meet. Maintenance of the restored stream sections will be SHA's responsibility. Permitting is to occur in FY19.

**Improvements for Those Who Walk and Cycle:** CA continued to improve its own pathway system with repaving and pathway widenings. In FY18, pathway directional signs for Kendall Ridge (19 signs) and for the Lake Elkhorn to Hopewell Pool pathway (seven signs) were designed and produced. Implementation will be completed in the first quarter of FY19. The directional signs are a popular enhancement for those who walk and bicycle on CA's pathways.

**State-of-the-Art Facilities:** CA completed construction of the Long Reach Indoor Tennis Facility in the Spring of 2018 to address the need for cutting-edge, indoor tennis courts. The facility replaced the aging indoor courts at Owen Brown, where the bubble had outlived its useful life, with six, new indoor courts, equipped with the following features: climate-controlled environment, energy-efficient lighting and PlaySight Smart Court technology — cameras that can make line calls for you as you play. The cameras also allow players to live-stream matches online or through a mobile app, so they can review their strokes, track stats, and work with a coach to improve their game. PlaySight is currently installed on one court, with plans to expand to additional courts.

**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.”**

## **Overview**

Columbia Association plays an important role in ensuring that the shared community vision for Columbia remains in the forefront as the community advances toward its next 50 years. To achieve this goal, CA goes beyond its programs, services, activities and events to collaborate with community organizations to discuss topics and resolve issues that affect the quality of life in Columbia. Also, CA is the steward of Columbia's history through Columbia Archives, where the history of Columbia and its founding values are collected, preserved and shared with the community. Following Barbara Kellner's long service and 2017 retirement, CA hired Lela Sewell-Williams as the new Archives Manager in early 2018.

## **FY18 Highlights**

**Columbia Vision and Celebration:** In FY18, CA, in conjunction with many community partners, implemented the Columbia 50th Birthday celebration and events. We met the goals of the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, which were to generate awareness of Columbia's history and values, serve as a catalyst for imagination and innovation in creating community, and promote the original values of Columbia in addressing the needs of people.

**Collaboration:** CA joined with the Horizon Foundation and over 30 other business, health, environment and transportation organizations and thousands of individuals to support and advocate for funding and implementation of the Bikeway, a core network of the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan that will create a more bikeable Howard County. As a result of this advocacy work, Howard County Government increased funding for bicycle improvements on county roads and introduced BikeHoward Express, a three-year plan similar to the Bikeway, to fast-track core bicycle investments, many of which are in Columbia.

**Community Building Speakers Series.** CA, in collaboration with the Community Foundation of Howard County, hosted two speakers to address the community on best practices, policies and tools to help older neighborhoods remain attractive and economically vibrant. CA also held a screening of "Citizen Jane," a film about the pioneering urban planner Jane Jacobs. This was held in cooperation with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. Both events were well-attended.

**Promoting Columbia Association as a Place to Work:** CA contracted with a national, leading company for recruitment (Glassdoor) and developed a "Why Come to Work for CA" video on the Glassdoor website page for CA and on CA's own website.

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

### **Overview**

Columbia Association informs residents, members and the general public about its programs, events, activities, and opportunities through many channels, including ColumbiaAssociation.org, print, digital and broadcast media, and a presence at community events. The Customer and Member Service Center team, in conjunction with the Maggie J. Brown Welcome Center, are available six days a week to assist residents, members, guests and others in obtaining the information and services they seek. In addition, CA's fitness clubs are open seven days a week and are staffed with team members who can assist anyone with information about a membership and other opportunities at CA. Our website and social media are other avenues for engagement.

## **FY18 Highlights**

**Sports and Fitness Open Houses:** Sports and Fitness held three open houses to invite the public into our facilities to experience what we have to offer. Over 900 non-member guests participated.

**Website Enhancements for Camps and Older Adults:** Updated CA Camps webpage to make it easier for the community to learn about camp program offerings and sign-up. We also updated the links that provide helpful resources for older adults on CA's website at <http://bit.ly/MatureAdultsHelpfulResources>

**Sales Team:** With the new membership structure in place since the beginning of FY18, and in response to growing competition for a share of our community's health and wellness time, CA deployed a dedicated sales team in the second half of FY 18. CA hired and trained a membership director and full- and part-time dedicated membership sales advocates who work in the three fitness clubs, Haven on the Lake and Hobbit's Glen Golf Club. This makes it much easier for the customer: the on-site sales force explains the various membership options and the merits of CA's clubs and other sport and fitness facilities.

**New Climate Change and Sustainability Advisory Committee Established:** The mission is to advise CA on matters related to climate change, work with the village community associations and CA to enhance public engagement and facilitate advancement of clean energy practices and environmental sustainability in the community.

## **Goal 5: “Demonstrate the practices of a high-performing and responsive organization.”**

### **Overview**

When CA talks about our employees, we often refer to them as “team members.” As team members focus on service to the community, they play an important part in enhancing the quality of life in Columbia. CA needs to continue to manage its financial assets, provide team member training, and make investments in technology that reinforce CA as a high-performing and responsive organization.

### **FY18 Highlights**

**New Steering Committee.** At the recommendation of the IT Advisory Committee, CA established an internal Business/Technology Steering Committee to advise CA's President and

provide leadership in strategic business/technology planning, project prioritization/management, and project approval as well as direction on long-term technology strategies for CA.

**Informed Workforce.** The Learning and Organizational Development Division created a new online compliance course to educate team members about CA's code of business conduct and ethics policies. The course covers topics such as discrimination and harassment, Americans with Disabilities Act, information security, workplace violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and how to report ethics violations. In FY 18, more than 1,400 CA team members completed the course either as refresher training or as part of their new hire onboarding process.

**Management Training:** The Learning and Organizational Development Division introduced and taught a new Management Essentials Course, a 12-hour course delivered in four modules over a four-week period, designed to improve the management skills of our CA Team Leaders.

**Innovation in Technology.** In FY18, an inter-departmental team led by CA's Director of Finance/Treasurer, implemented Power Plan, a cloud-based budgeting application. The FY19 and Conditional FY20 operating and capital budgets were developed using this application. This tool allowed for much more detailed analysis and budget review, and provided managers with more historical and transactional data within one application for their use as they developed their budgets.

**New Online Customer Tools:** School Age Services implemented online registration and had appointments for participants to turn in their paperwork for the 2017/2018 school year, which eliminated customers waiting in line outside of CA's headquarters building for available spots. Sports and Fitness implemented a new online reservation system at Hobbit's Glen called Golf Genius and introduced live scoring for tournaments. In addition, Sports and Fitness introduced an online coaching and communication platform in tennis called Tenicity, which links the player, coach and parent as part of player development for competitive juniors in the program. We also launched PlaySight Smart Court Pro Technology at Long Reach Tennis Club, which can call lines, the score as well as be used for coaching.

## **Appendix Offers More Details**

This summary is supplemented by an appendix with more detail. Together they include new or enhanced initiatives, services, facilities and programs from the past year. Of course, it is impossible to list all the activities as we work to achieve our mission of "working every day in hundreds of ways to make Columbia an even better place to live, work and play."