

2024 Columbia Association Five-Year Strategic Plan

Columbia Association (CA), Howard County, Maryland

STRATEGIC PLANNING



PROJECT DETAILS

DIFFICULTY: Hard

COST: \$65,000

TIMEFRAME: Five (5) Months

DELIVERABLES: A Five-Year Strategic Plan and surveys summary.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- Strategic Planning
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Community Development
- Public Involvement

PROJECT TEAM

Vision Planning and Consulting
Wallace Montgomery

CLIENT CONTACT

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

VPC was contracted by the Columbia Association (CA) to develop a Strategic Plan and to help CA foster the involvement of the Board, senior staff, internal/external stakeholders, other strategic partners, and the residents and visitors of Columbia throughout the planning process, to build a general consensus on strengths and improvements, and to create a strong, measurable, and strategic path for CA moving towards its desired future position over the next five years.

PROJECT SUMMARY

VPC first developed and disseminated a public survey to capture the public's viewpoint on what they desire from CA and the community of Columbia in general, the community direction over the next five years, and how that can be addressed and incorporated into the Strategic Plan Update. The public survey was available through the CA website, CA social media accounts, and through QR codes posted in CA facilities. This was proven to be a successful marketing strategy as it garnered over 1,100 responses over the course of one month.

During the planning process, the VPC Team met with and received vital input from CA staff, representatives from all ten villages of Columbia, community organizations and partners, and the CA Board of Directors. VPC met with the CA Senior Leadership Team to begin brainstorming an updated CA mission and vision, as well as updated strategic focus areas. The Team conducted five staff interviews, including with the CA President/CEO, Vice President/CFO, and additional CA program directors and senior staff, to get a further understanding of the intricacies of the Organization and to obtain more detailed Strategic Plan-related input.

Following staff interviews, VPC met with all ten Columbia Villages as well as select community partners/organizations to obtain input related to how CA can better support them with regard to the strategic focus areas previously formulated.

VPC then facilitated a work session with the CA Board of Directors (BoD) to present what has already been received through the other points of stakeholder engagement, and to capture feedback related to the mission/vision, strategic focus areas, and associated objectives and recommendations. VPC was able to address the concerns of the BoD throughout the planning process, and still incorporate what was heard from the CA staff, villages, community organizations, and the public.

Through intense discussion with stakeholders, a total of five strategic focus areas were included in the plan, including 3 new focus areas not included in the previous Plan (Community Engagement; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB); and Technology and Information Systems). For each strategic area, objectives and associated recommendations were formulated and included in the updated Strategic Plan.

The final deliverable comprised: a call to action, strategy and roadmap, DEI efforts, goals, strategic priorities, and a progress tracking table. VPC then presented the final Strategic Plan to the CA BoD and received final approval. Additional deliverables included a Public Survey Summary, a compilation of all stakeholder engagement notes, and an implementation plan for the updated Strategy.